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MEYRICK'S PROMISE

By

E. C. PHILLIPS

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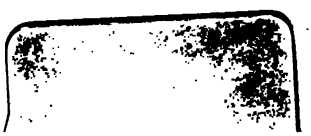

"Neither child spoke for some time."—p. 276

MEYRICK'S PROMISE

OR

LITTLE FUGITIVES FROM THE JAMAICA REBELLION

IN 1865

BY

E. C. PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF "THE GERMANS," "BIRDIE AND HER DOG," ETC.

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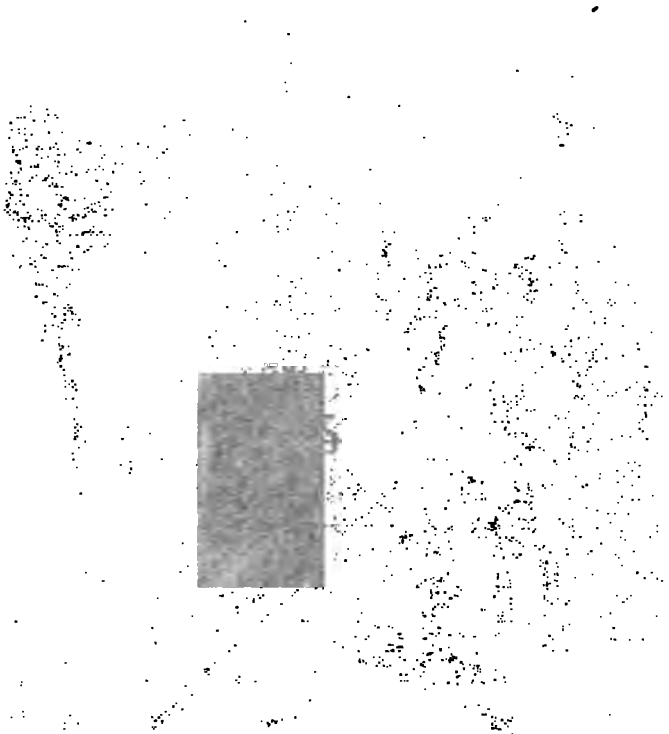

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MONTHLY MAGAZINES FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

EVERY BOY'S MAGAZINE .... 6*d.*
EVERY GIRL'S MAGAZINE 6*d*
LITTLE WIDE-AWAKE ..... 3*d.*

Inscribed

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR SISTER,

ELLEN NEIL JACKSON,

WHO PASSED THROUGH THE DANGERS OF THE REBELLION IN JAMAICA,
AND SPENT HER LAST HOURS IN THE ISLAND.

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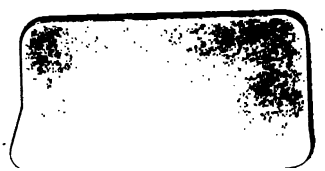

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"Neither child spoke for some time."—p. 276

MEYRICK'S PROMISE.

CHAPTER I.

WOODLANDS.

AT half-past six o'clock on Wednesday evening the 11th of October, 1865, Meyrick and Meta, the two eldest children of Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, stood at one of the drawing-room doors of their pretty bungalow, watching and listening—watching for their father who had left home early in the morning for the court-house, and who ought to have returned some time ago, and listening to the sound of distant fire-arms echoing through the mountains.

This had been altogether an exciting day, during which the children had seen many people pass backwards and forwards through Blue Mountain Valley, where everything was usually so very quiet, and during which they had also heard the report of very many guns.

Pedro, the collie watch-dog, was with the children, wandering restlessly up and down the room, stopping first at one door, then at another, as though he, too, were watching and listening for some one.

It was half-past eleven o'clock in England, for

Woodlands, Meyrick and Meta's home, in Blue Mountain Valley, was in Jamaica, one of the West India islands, where time is five hours earlier than it is here.

The drawing-room at Woodlands was large, and, in spite of the great heat of Jamaica, very cool, for not one of its seven windows was shut to-day. A door, opening into a porch, led into a side garden, another was the entrance, through the verandah (which extended all round the house) into the front garden. At this the children stood, and out of a third you stepped into the only passage of the bungalow.

There was no carpet in this or any other room in the house, but all the floors were of beautiful brown polished wood, and so slippery that Meyrick and Meta often had a fall when they ran quickly across them.

The drawing-room furniture was very pretty and was made of varieties of mahoe, juniper, mahogany and peacock mahogany wood. One table in the centre, on which the children were never allowed to put anything, was of yacca inlaid with mahoe.

A large play-horse of Meyrick's stood in the drawing-room porch. This was often allowed to be its stable, so long as it went out of, and came into, the garden through the verandah.

A few minutes ago Meta had run out of the drawing-room to stand Jessie, her favourite doll, whom she had been nursing all the afternoon, in a corner of the nursery because she said this doll had been naughty, but Meta had soon come back again to Meyrick.

Mrs. Cleveland took pride in her house and her children, and not without reason people said, for not a prettier house than Mrs. Cleveland's, nor more interesting children than Meyrick and Meta, were to be seen in the whole of Jamaica.

To-day they were both dressed in white and navy-blue, the trimmings on Meyrick's sailor suit matching those on Meta's frock, but though alike in dress, the children were not at all so in face.

Meta was fair like her mother, with large blue eyes and almost golden hair, whilst Meyrick had long, dark chestnut curls, and a somewhat sun-burnt complexion.

Meyrick did not like his curls and wanted to have them off, but mother loved them, and had made father promise, who rather sided with Meyrick in wishing them away, that they should remain for one month longer, when he would be seven years old.

Meta was now five, and the babies, twin brothers, were ten months old.

A little girl of two had died of fever a year ago.

The loss of her little daughter had been a sore trial to Mrs. Cleveland, but her good husband had comforted her in their mutual trouble, telling her not to murmur at God's dealings with His children, who really sent trials as tokens of His love in disguise.

She listened to him, and then bore her sorrow bravely.

When the twins came, the little brothers, so strangely alike, occupied so much of her time and thoughts, that there was no room then left in her heart for grieving.

The property called Woodlands consisted of 1,000 acres of land, abounding in mahogany, cedar, juniper, logwood, fustic and other valuable trees, about 150 acres of coffee, the barbecues, or large stone pavements, on which the coffee was spread out to be dried, the family or great house, and the works.

The house itself, like so many others in Jamaica, was one-storied, but the rooms, of which there were ten, were all large and lofty, the day-nursery, kitchen, pantry, two bedrooms and the sleeping apartments for the servants being out of doors; the kitchen, servants' rooms and nursery across the yard, the nursery quite detached from any other building.

Sydney Cleveland embarked for Jamaica very soon after he came into possession of Woodlands, and six months after he had married Mabel Carlisle, the orphan of a captain who had lost his life in the Crimean war.

She was an orphan in the widest sense of the term, for her mother had died when she was a very little girl.

Aunt Irving, an elder sister of Mabel's father, and the child's godmother as well as aunt, had, so soon as the little one became motherless, fetched her to her own home, and adopted her as her own child.

Captain Carlisle was often away with his regiment, but when on leave his sister's house became his head quarters as well as the home of his little girl.

Mabel was very glad when, sometimes after a two or three years' absence, father would come home once more, although she loved most fondly her whom God had given to be to her a second mother.

Aunt Irving, as she would always be called, had

no child of her own, so she could devote herself very thoroughly to Mabel.

Married at twenty, a widow at twenty-two, she had tasted few of the pleasures of life—many of its sorrows.

When her great sorrow came upon her people said that the pretty, rich widow would soon marry again, that it was no wonder she was now sad and desolate, having lost one of the best of husbands, but that time would heal her grief as it healed the grief of so many of her neighbours; it could not embitter her whole after life.

But public opinion misjudged Mabel Irving when it thus arranged her future. She was certainly very young to lay down, and have done for ever with, life's pleasures as far as she herself was concerned, but this was what happened when at two-and-twenty her husband was taken from her.

She did not mourn selfishly, she knew that the rest of her life, lived for itself, whatever its length and breadth, must be passed in shadow, behind a cloud, where the sunshine could not penetrate; but she resolved to step out of herself, as it were, straight into the lives of others, and in sharing their griefs, partaking of their joys, ministering to their wants, spending herself and being spent for them, bury her own sorrow.

And no sooner had she thus resolved, and prayed to God to bless her resolution, and help her to live this new life that she had shaped out for herself, than many, many opportunities to befriend some fellow-creature presented themselves to her, as to whom of us do

they not present themselves, as we journey from the cradle to the grave, unless we are too wilfully blind to perceive them?

Mabel Irving's heart was very large—capable of rejoicing with the rich and prosperous, and sorrowing and sympathizing with the sick and sad and poor; she knew how to lighten the infirmities of the old man or woman, and little children never went to her in vain to have their small wants recognized and supplied.

This, then, was the good, kind Aunt Irving who had filled, as far as she could, the mother's place to Meyrick and Meta's mother from the age of two years old to that of one-and-twenty, when their father married and carried her away to Jamaica, in the year 1857.

Poor Aunt Irving was very sorry when two years after Captain Carlisle had died, Sydney Cleveland took her foster-child so far away from her, and often had she followed her in prayer and thought to her island-home across the broad Atlantic. Mabel left few real friends behind in England. An only child, she had no near relative, besides her father's sister, to whom to bid adieu, but over this parting she shed many very bitter tears, although the husband with whom, and for whom, she was leaving her native land, was very dear to her.

Very eagerly every mail she looked for her packet-letter—letters they had been at first, but one by one her friends had left off writing to her, and it was only the one letter from home, that always came regularly twice a month, for which she so eagerly longed.

Yesterday she had despatched her last letter home.

Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland had lived at Woodlands, in Blue Mountain Valley, ever since they had arrived in Jamaica, and here in its pretty great house all their children had been born.

CHAPTER II.

FOOTSTEPS.

WHILST Meyrick and Meta were in the drawing-room waiting for father, their mother was in the night nursery waiting and watching also, but oh! with what terrible anxiety, for she knew of danger that threatened their father, of which these children knew nothing, or doting on him as they did, longing for his return as they always longed for it, when he had driven into Kingston or had been absent for some hours riding through the mountains, they could not, had they dreamt of any danger threatening him, have laughed at the many reports of the guns that reached them, comparing them to baby thunder.

Mabel Cleveland was holding Sydney, one of the twins; Nana was with her and had just put to sleep his brother Francis.

Oh! where was her husband? Mabel Cleveland asked herself again and again.

News had reached her that from 300 to 500 black men had risen in rebellion, and that a crowd of men armed with cutlasses, sticks, muskets and bayonets had entered a large, open space in front of the court-house in Morant Bay, in which the magistrates, of whom her husband was one, and certain elected members, were assembled. She had heard that they

had rushed upon the volunteers, disarmed some of them, had overpowered the police, set on fire the court-house and had pelted with stones, and fired at, those within it. She had heard also that some of the magistrates and members were killed, many were wounded, and that others had escaped. Amongst which division was he? Where, at that moment, was she to picture her husband?

It was not only to-day that Mrs. Cleveland had been anxious, but ever since the first resistance to authority, on Saturday last, had she felt that some evil, some calamity was pending, and she had told her fears only that very morning to her husband, begging him to stay at home; but, always obedient to every call of duty, he had answered that he could not do so.

"Oh Nana," Mrs. Cleveland exclaimed, looking at her watch as she spoke, "isn't it dreadfully late?"

Nana too had a very anxious face, and if Mrs. Cleveland had watched her movements she would have seen that she was now busy making up a bundle of the children's clothes. A man in passing had just told Nana that rebels were on their way to level an attack on Blue Mountain Valley, and she was preparing, should this prove necessary, as she was told it might, to hide her missis and "the pick-'ninnies" in the bush that night. She would need blankets to guard them all against the dew and the cold, that in Jamaica accompanies its falling, so she was collecting small ones that could be easily carried. From time to time the faithful black woman walked to the window and looked out. She had been with her young Mar'sa and Mistress ever since they landed in

Jamaica, and she loved them and their children better than her own life, and would risk anything to serve them.

"Oh Nana," Mrs. Cleveland went on, "where is he? It is quite dark now."

"Dark, all the better," Nana answered, "more hope see Mars'a in dark than light."

"But if he's wounded, Nana, oh, if he's wounded!" then she added quickly, "but where are Meyrick and Meta?" She seemed to have forgotten them for the time. Nana told her mistress that they were with Pedro in the drawing-room.

"Oh, poor children," the anxious mother then exclaimed, pressing, as she spoke, little Sydney to her heart, then adding in a different voice, "Don't you think little Syd is very like his father, Nana? I so often see the likeness."

"Not more like than other; two babies just same, except that," answered Nana, jealous for Francis of the extra love she sometimes fancied their mother bestowed upon Sydney, and as she spoke she pointed to the tiniest black mole, perceptible under the baby's chin.

"I think I see a greater likeness in Syd and his father has that little mole too, but, hark, what's that noise?" Mrs. Cleveland then asked eagerly, and whilst she spoke Meyrick dashed into the room, Meta following him, both children exclaiming, speaking as fast as they could,—

"Footsteps, mother, we hear steps, but no carriage wheels and no horses, and Pedro's rushed out, and he didn't bark?"

"Hush, children," said their mother, handing Sydney to his Nana with these words—"Take him, Nana, his boy, his little namesake," and then she hurried from the room, Meyrick and Meta at her heels, to meet on the threshold of the house, her husband, their father—not driving—not walking, but borne on a stretcher carried by faithful Jimmy the butler and Thoney* the African boy coachman, and the face of her husband, as the loving, eager wife first caught a glimpse of it, was ghastly pale.

* Pronounced "Tony."

CHAPTER III.

FATHER.

SILENTLY Mrs. Cleveland motioned to the men to carry their precious burden to her bedroom, and as she followed her husband, she saw that his coat was unbuttoned, his waistcoat off, his shirt stained with blood, and that his left arm hung powerless at his side. Meyrick and Meta clung to their mother, and hid their faces in the folds of her dress. Jimmy, Thoney, and Nana, the only servants now to be found to gather round, and minister to, one of the best of masters, shook their heads.

"Hi young Missis," said Jimmy, "dis a wicked work fe true, young Mar'sa sent home so." Sydney Cleveland opened his eyes when laid upon the bed, as though recovering from a swoon. Thoney took Sydney from his Nana, who had rushed out after her mistress, with the baby in her arms, and carrying him, and leading Meyrick and Meta, he went into the night nursery, the two elder children crying meanwhile pitifully.

"What can we do, Nana?" asked Mabel Cleveland, looking beseechingly into the black woman's good, kind face. "Oh look! here is the wound, do you think the bullet can be still in?"

"Young Mar'sa shot through body, but shot no

dere now, young Missis," said Jimmy. "Doctor fetch shot out." She bit her lips to force back the tears that were choking her, and wrung her hands in despair.

"Oh how he must have suffered, how he must be suffering now!" she exclaimed.

"Mar'sa no pain now," answered Jimmy. "Young Mar'sa too weak feel pain."

She moistened his lips with brandy, and tried herself, with wet rags, to stop the wound from whence the blood still flowed copiously, but with no avail. She had already told Jimmy to go at once for the doctor, in reply to which Sydney Cleveland had faltered, looking up into his wife's face, "It's no good, it's no good."

Jimmy knew that no doctor could now be found. At the sound of his well-known voice, at the sound of those three short words that meant so much misery, she broke into an agony of grief, for she could restrain her tears no longer. The sick man motioned to Jimmy and Nana to go away, and then that wonderful strength sometimes vouchsafed to the dying just before death, came to him, and speaking softly and slowly, but still in his natural voice, he gave his wife some last injunctions. He told her first that traitorous blacks, rising in rebellion, had set fire to the court-house, had shot him and broken his arm, and that many members were dead, and more than he knew of were, no doubt, dying in the bush to which they had escaped.

His two faithful servants had brought him home, carrying him all the way through bye-paths, the

carriage not being able to be had, as it was put up at the court-house. He told her that half an hour hence she and the children must not be found here, as the rebels were marching in this direction, and would capture them if they stayed. They must flee to the bush at once, where Jimmy would look after them.

"And perhaps you will get better there," she said. He shook his head.

"I must die here," he answered, "I am much too weak to move again," but he did not tell her, for he did not know, how very near his end really was.

"Don't trouble about me," he went on, "but save yourself and the children; if I knew you were out of their reach (and I feel sure that God will protect you from them) I could die much happier. Write home next mail, dear Mabel, to tell Aunt Irving what has happened, and say that you will bring the children to England. I have, thank God, been able to settle on you enough to live very comfortably."

Sob after sob was all the answer that his wife made or could make.

"God still knows best," said the dying Christian, his faith not shaken even now. "His ways are not our ways, and we cannot see clearly why he permits suffering, but some day we shall know even as we are known. Trust your God and Father, my darling, teach our little ones to do the same, and the time will pass very quickly till we meet again."

She was chafing his hands—the one with feeling and the one without, and covering them with kisses. If she could but restore his strength—if

"'I promise, father,' he said."—p 15

she could but put life and feeling into that poor, maimed arm, lying there so helplessly. With his right hand he drew her towards him, then asked for the children, who were all brought in.

"My boy," he said to Meyrick, speaking first to the little fellow who stood before him, with a dreadfully tear-stained face, "father has to go away from you and can't come back again as he always does, but some day he hopes you will come to him. Will you do something to please father when he's gone?"

"Yes father," faltered Meyrick.

"Be a good and obedient boy to your mother and Nana," he then said, "and take care of your sister and be very kind to her. She is your only sister, Meyrick. Will you promise me to take great care of, and be very good to, Meta?"

The little boy's eyes sparkled nervously.

He did not quite understand all that was taking place, but his little mind grasped the fact that some dreadful sorrow had befallen them, that their father was leaving them all, like little Amy had left them, never to return again, and his quiet, solemn, serious manner awed the child. He understood what his father had asked him to promise, and he had learnt from him what a promise meant. He was to take care of Meta, just as if he had been a big boy; he was to look after her, keep her out of mischief, and let her have his toys and picture-books if she wanted them. His father must think him a big boy now to ask him to do all this, and the request pleased the child.

"I *promise* father," he said. "I've often broken Meta's toys and I've pushed her away and said she

troubled me when she wanted mine, and I wouldn't let her put up my soldiers yesterday, but I'll let her put them up now; I'll take *good* care of her," he repeated a second time, and as the little fellow gazed so earnestly at his dying father, and spoke those words of promise, he must have looked something like little Richard of Normandy, as he sat that last night on the knee of his father, good Duke William of the Long Sword, and learnt half the secret of the little golden key that hung upon his sword, and promised to forgive his enemies.

Then Meta, in turn, clung to her father and received his blessing, the twins were held by their Nana to be kissed by him, for the last time, and as the dying man said "good-bye" to the good nurse, before she turned sorrowfully away, to carry back the babies, he begged her to take very good care of her mistress.

Mrs. Cleveland was once more alone with her husband. She knelt by his bed side, again and again she moistened his lips and applied rags to his wound, but each moment as it passed only left him weaker than the moment before, quenching all hope of his recovery.

Tears stood in his eyes as, in silence, he now looked at his dearly-loved wife—tears poured down her cheeks as she gazed silently at her dying husband. He was the first to speak.

"You ought to start now," he said, "or it may be too late, no white man, woman, or child will be safe here to-night, nor any black man or woman, whom the rebels suspect to be on our side."

"Nana shall take the children," she answered, "I could not leave you. I would die a hundred deaths, suffer a thousand tortures sooner than stir from your side."

He could not urge her to leave him again; he felt—she saw—the change come over him as the blood, now flowing very copiously from his wound, most terribly reduced his strength, and uttering a few more loving, patient, trustful words, he laid his head on to his wife's shoulder and fell into that last sleep into which we fall in this world!

A few moments later Nana, looking in, saw what had happened, but before she had time to speak one word of comfort, Jimmy was at the door with an urgent message. The rebels were not a mile off. Every servant belonging to the property but Thoney and themselves had deserted and gone down to meet the rebels, and if they would save young missis and the pickneys they must start at once.

It was a very sad, honest black face that bent over the bed on which lay poor Sydney Cleveland, and from the depths of a very faithful, loving heart came these words which Jimmy spoke, "Poor young Mar'sa, good sweet young Mar'sa, God take him to Hisself and gib him rest."

Then he added, "hab mercy on me poor pretty Missis an dem poor Buckra pick'ninnies."

"God bless you, Jimmy," said Mabel Cleveland, looking up through her scalding tears, "and reward you for what you have done for him. But what did you say? must we really go away and leave him?"

"Dis minute," said Jimmy, "dere's not one minute to be loss."

"And leave him?" she asked again.

"Jimmy return back an see to burying poor Mar'sa 'fore day-clean, when young Missis an' dem pick'ninnies safe 'way in de bush, but Nana, dem must go at once," he continued, looking very anxious.

"He said go and his children are in danger," murmured poor Mabel Cleveland, as she flung herself down beside the bed, to take a last farewell of him who lay upon it, and then, never taking her eyes from off that dear form, she suffered herself to be led by Nana from the room, who had, without her knowing it, already put on her hat and shawl.

She hardly knew what she was doing, she only remembered that he had gone, had left her behind, and had said "go" to her.

Nana had made everything ready for this sudden departure. Meyrick and Meta now stood in the dining-room with their hats on; Thoney was minding the babies.

"Has father gone away yet?" asked Meyrick, as his mother and Nana joined them; but he did not repeat the question when he saw how dreadfully sad his mother looked, and again he and Meta cried too.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BUSH JOURNEY.

THE party started, Mrs. Cleveland, her children, Nana, Jimmy, Thoney, and Pedro. Jimmy had searched in vain for another servant to help, but not a single one besides these three had remained faithful.

The bush journey was attended with danger and difficulty. Darkness had already overtaken the fugitives, and at any point on the road they might be met and attacked by rebels. Jimmy and Thoney led the way, carrying, slung over their shoulders, a hammock, in which they had placed Meyrick, Meta, and Nana's bag and bundles. Jimmy wished to carry his mistress also in the hammock, but she said they would be too heavy a load for him and Thoney, and she would much rather walk.

Mabel Cleveland had never seen any one thus carried before. Hammocks are not commonly used in Jamaica as they are in many tropical countries, but Sydney Cleveland having been fond of his comforts, he had had this hammock made and slung up for a lounge in the verandah, in which sometimes to recline for a time on very hot days, never dreaming of the good use to which it would one day be put.

Nana carried the twins, having a shawl tied round her neck and right arm, to make it easier for her to do so, and their mother walked beside her.

After a time Jimmy halted. They had reached one of those rivers so numerous in the Jamaica mountains, over which there is no bridge.

He and Thoney, who were bare-footed, could cross easily, for they knew the fording well, and as the rainy season had not yet begun the river was not swollen, but young Missis must be carried over the river, Jimmy said, and she knew that she could not cross it by herself, so she waited on one side with Nana whilst the men took Meyrick and Meta over to the other. Then the children jumped out of the hammock and the men returned with it to carry over their mistress, who seemed timid at the thought of too many being in the hammock at once. Nana took off her shoes and stockings, tucked up her petticoats, and Jimmy returned again "to cross" one of the twins for her, whilst she crossed with the other.

Meyrick and Meta were put once more into the hammock, their mother began her weary walk again, and, brave woman that she was, continued it through thick bush, up hill, down hill, round many bye-paths, till at last the hiding-place which Jimmy had selected was reached, and this strange, night bush journey was completed.

This shelter was a small open space surrounded on all sides by bush, under the shadow of a mango tree, whose thick branches and long, laurel-shaped leaves would, in a great measure, protect them from the dew and also from rain, should this come down.

"Is it not cold for the children, Nana? will the babies be all right?" asked their mother, as the nurse was helping to spread the wraps which they had brought with them, so that her poor, tired mistress could sit down upon them.

These were the first questions she had asked since they left home; she had walked along in perfect silence.

"Babies well wrap up," was the answer, "I no think they take any hurt."

"Are you warm, mother dear?" Meyrick asked, cuddling close up to his mother's side, and taking the hand Meta was not holding, "I'm all right, and I think Meta is too."

Mrs. Cleveland did not know whether she was hot or cold.

"What have we come here for?" she asked, looking round, as though half unconscious of what was taking place.

"We run 'way from rebels," said Thoney, "dem so mad gin (against) Buckra, dat dem no stop at noting. Dem kill we too if dem de chance, 'cause dem say we black skin but white heart. Dem wants blood, Buckra blood, an' dem'll get it."

"They *have* had it," said Mabel Cleveland, "oh such precious blood, what more can they want?"

"Me asked meself dem same words," said Thoney, "but me no find answer. Me sooner dead dan hurt Buckra, for dem's been good to me. Me Mar'sa an' me Missis mind me well, and me love Buckra, an' dem can do everyting but gib an keep life—dem no y'able fe do dat, only de great God above!" and

Thoney sighed. "De black man can't do widdout de Buckra, aldough some of dem now fe try it on."

Jimmy agreed with every word that Thoney uttered, but he knew that there was now no time to discuss either the virtues or the faults of the white or black man.

He and Nana were untying the bundles and making arrangements to put the children to bed.

Meyrick and Meta, who had cried a good deal for father as they came along in the hammock, were now almost ready to cry for hunger and fatigue.

They had had very little to eat since their dinner between two and three o'clock.

Nana had already laid the twins down between some wraps, and they were fast asleep, the air seeming to lull them to rest, for they had really not been awake since they had left home.

The good nurse now opened her bag and brought out of it a loaf, some biscuits and a little jam, the only things on which she could lay her hands. She had thought of giving the children biscuits on the road, but as her bag was in the hammock she knew that getting, and opening it might lose time, and it was not safe to loiter one moment on the road. A bottle of milk was in the basket, another, that she had carried in her pocket, the babies had already finished. She gave Meyrick and Meta a very little milk and saved the rest for the babies.

Jimmy and Thoney then slung up the hammock between two branches of the mango tree, and in it Nana laid the twins.

"Eat quick now," she then said to Meyrick and Meta, "and then I put you to sleep," for she spoke a much better English than Jimmy and Thoney.

"Isn't it a funny place to go to sleep in?" whispered Meta to Meyrick.

"Yes," answered her brother, but he said very softly, as he drew Meta a little on one side, "I wish father was here too, don't you?"

"Oh yes," said Meta, "and his arm quite well again. When will he come back?"

"Never," answered the little boy, "that's the dreadful part of it, he's never coming back, but don't tell mother. I expect he's gone to Amy."

"Doesn't mother know?"

"Yes, but I expect she doesn't like to hear again."

"Arn't the fire-flies pretty?" then asked Meta, as these beautiful little insects darted here and there lighting up the bush.

The children had never before been out of doors after dark, and had only seen the fire-flies through the windows, or in the rooms, when the little creatures, coming there to visit them, had shone even brighter than the lamps themselves.

In Jamaica, after the hot sun has set, the dew falls very heavily, when in the mountains the air is often quite damp and cool.

Except on bright moonlight nights there it would be pitch dark if it were not for these pretty flies, all of which emit light, either from their heads or bodies.

Like in the country in England, there are no gas-lamps to light the Jamaica mountains; even in

Kingston, the capital and chief town of Jamaica, the streets were only first lighted by gas in 1877.

These candle-flies were a source of great delight to the children this evening, and they were very glad of the light they afforded, for the shade cast by the mango branches nearly hid the moon from view, although it had now arisen, and Nana, though she had brought her little lamp with her, could not light it, as she had, in her hurry, forgotten the oil-can.

"Arn't the fire-flies pretty, mother?" asked Meta again.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Cleveland, for she liked candle or fire-flies very much, but she had an Englishwoman's instinctive dread of insects, and at that moment she was thinking that the bush, their home for the night, probably abounded in lizards of all kinds, rats, devil-horses, large spiders, snakes, and she shuddered.

"Meyrick and Meta must be very tired," said their mother; "they had better go to sleep at once."

"Shall we undress?" asked Meta.

"Of course not," answered Meyrick, who rather liked the idea of the hammock-bed, in which their mother said the children were all to sleep; "we are out of doors, of course."

"But we shall say our prayers, shan't we?" asked Meta; "because you know we are going to bed and we have not said them yet."

From the very hour these little ones could speak they had learnt to lisp their prayers, and it would have seemed to them an impossible neglect to leave them out for one night.

They said "Our Father," a hymn, and a little prayer of their own making up, for their parents had always told them that they could pray for what they wanted, and ask their Heavenly Father to give to them, and to all those whom they loved, whatever they needed that was for their good. They wished them, whilst very little lambs of the fold, to understand that there was a very real communion between the Good Shepherd and each little ransomed lamb whom he loved, and the great blessing it was to be allowed to come to God in prayer through Him.

This Meyrick and Meta had, in a measure, learnt already, although they were so very young, and prayer was to them no empty form.

Mrs. Cleveland was now seated on one of the wraps which Nana had spread out under the tree; her head was buried in her hands and she was thinking.

Meyrick's head, put on to her shoulder, roused her from her reverie. He was kneeling up to say his prayers.

His mother told him that as he was so tired he need only say a very short prayer to-night, but he said he thought he had better say them all.

His own little prayer was:

"Pray God bless father and mother, show us the way to go to father, make Meta good, me good, Jimmy good, Nana good, Thoney good, make me take care of Meta, make mother not cry any more. Don't let the cruel people that Jimmy's hiding us from, find us; don't let Syddy and Francis be cold. Bless me and every body for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

"That's all, mother," he said, as he kissed her, and was lifted, by Nana, into the hammock, where, beside the babies, he fell fast asleep the very next moment.

Meta knelt to pray also, but she, a strangely reserved little child, did not speak the words aloud, so no one heard the prayer of her little heart but the God and Father to whom it was addressed, and perhaps the angel guardian who had spread his sheltering wings to protect and guard that night in the bush the little child committed to his special care.

CHAPTER V.

JIMMY GRANT.

PEDRO wandered restlessly to and fro. He was very ill at ease, knowing that something was very wrong, and again and again he pricked up his ears to listen for any sound that might approach them. Like his sorrowing mistress he refused to eat even a biscuit.

She never closed her eyes for one moment that night. She sat leaning against the rude bark of the tree with her eyes fixed on the sleeping faces of her children, and she seldom spoke except, in monosyllables, to answer questions put to her by faithful Nana.

The two elder children slept soundly all through the night, the swing of the hammock acting as a rocking cradle. The babies slept and woke, and cried and fed in turn, as is the custom with babies. Nana gave them soft biscuits ; they were too drowsy to eat any before they went to sleep. The children were all well covered over, and the mango branches protected them capitally against the dew that fell heavily throughout the night, and none of them took cold.

Jimmy and Thoney walked about on watch ; there were three good watchers, Jimmy, Thoney, and Pedro,

but these three could have done but little if attacked by a band of armed men.

This the two men felt as, from time to time, during the long night, they returned to the mango tree to ask how young Missis and the pick'ninnies did.

During that terrible night that saw the happy wife a widow, the proud mother an exile and a fugitive with her children from their pretty home, she seemed to be dreaming one long, awful dream, from which she had no power to awaken. Her hands were tightly clasped, and the passive grief that could find no relief in tears, seemed to wring her soul.

"*He* was with me yesterday morning, Nana," she said towards daybreak—"and now! Oh!" and then she wrung her hands in almost wild despair.

At this moment Jimmy came up carrying a bottle in his hand. He had been wandering some way into the bush to find, and milk, a goat that the children might have some milk for their early tea, and he had been successful. He now handed the bottle of fresh milk to Nana, who insisted on her mistress drinking a little to quench her thirst, assuring her that there was plenty for the children till Jimmy got some more.

This bottle Jimmy had put hurriedly into his pocket before he left home, and had washed in a stream hard by.

Poor Jimmy, he was very thoughtful!

"Is it not near day-clean, Jimmy?" Mrs. Cleveland asked.

"Yes, me good Missis," he answered, "an me jest garn."

In a quiet, firm voice she told him to bury his poor Mar'sa very carefully in a sequestered, shady corner of the garden, which she described to him.

It was a spot where, very often, she and her husband had sat and talked together, whilst Meta and Meyrick played around them.

Jimmy said that he knew where his Missis meant, and that he would do as she wished. Then she begged him to go at once and be back quickly, so that she might know that all was done.

Nana reminded Jimmy of a small bundle he had to bring, consisting of clothes and wraps which he was to collect and carry up for them; also she told him to bring a rug and to gather together all the provisions on which he could lay his hands if the rebels were not already in possession of Woodlands, (as the pick'ninnies would be hungry in the bush) and very little remained over from what they had brought away with them last night.

Mabel Cleveland would fain have gone instead of Jimmy, or rather with him, for what could she, weak woman, do alone? nothing, for nothing more could be done for her husband than to dig a grave for his burial, and for this she had no strength.

She envied the faithful servant going once more to look at that face so dear to her, and for the moment, she was tempted as he started, to call him back to say that she would come too, but she knew that for her children's sake she dared not do so, and *he* would have told her not to be so unwise.

Then she thought she must give Jimmy a message to carry to him, her love, her dearest love—hers and the children's. It seemed so impossible to realize that his spirit had really left this earth, that he had really gone away from her and them!

She felt deeply grateful to good Jimmy as she watched him out of sight. He walked fast but cautiously, looking all about him as he went, for he knew that he courted danger every step he took, for if white soldiers met him, they would, in all probability, at first mistake him for a rebel, and if he met men of his own colour, they would cut him down for being a deserter.

Jimmy's life was very precious to him now, more precious he counted it than he had ever counted it before, for both young Mar'sa and young Missis, who had been very good to him, required him to do something for them now—one last act of loving service for the mar'sa, and many deeds of devotion he hoped still to be able to perform for his mistress and her children.

It was very dark as Jimmy trudged along, for the moon had set, and the sun had not yet risen, but so much the better, as in the dark there was less fear of his being seen.

He could find his way as well in the dark as in the light, for he knew every step of the road.

Jimmy had been reared, brought up, educated in the bush, for it was little education that poor Jimmy Grant had had, but that which nature and his own kind heart had given him.

The child of coffee-pickers, as a baby of a few

weeks old, he had been carried to the fields when his parents went to work, and left to roll about in the bush for hours, whilst his mother gathered coffee, the little fellow, meanwhile, making friends with ants, lizards, snake-waiting-boys and even snakes, with which his place of shelter abounded.

When six years old he had been hired to a "pick'ninny gang" of workers, earning his 3d. or 6d. a day, and at ten there was no better, quicker climber of tall, sixty feet high cocoa-nut trees than Jimmy. After the lapse of a few more years he worked regularly four or five days a week at gathering coffee, hoeing, planting and weeding ground till he was able to build a comfortable little house of his own, in which he and some of his friends spent their short evenings very pleasantly.

Then young Mar'sa came to Jamaica, engaged Jimmy, and for more than seven years he had now been a Buckra servant, living on his master's property, and returning to his own little home generally from Friday middle day till Saturday night, during which time he would work his own ground.

In the employ of Mars' Cleveland Jimmy had learnt the meaning of the words Christian and Christianity; he had learnt in his humble fashion to accept Christ for his Saviour, know God as a Heavenly Father, and in return to become a dutiful, obedient child, a willing, loving follower and servant, and Jimmy was truly grateful to his master for the example he had set, and the good he had taught him.

But we must now join Jimmy again on his way to Woodlands. He had guessed his time well, fo

daylight was just breaking as he neared the property.

The rebels had not yet come up. They must have found other plunder on the road.

Jimmy went straight to the house and room in which his dead master lay. No one had disturbed the peace and sanctity of that room.

Young Mar'sa was lying covered over just as the missis had left him, and he was looking the same only yet happier and handsomer. All traces of pain had left his face, which now wore only an expression of perfect, restful peace.

How still the house seemed—still indeed "like death!"

How Jimmy missed young Mar'sa's call, young Missis' sunny presence in the house! what would he have given to hear the happy little voices of Mars' Meyrick and Miss Meta as he walked, all alone through the house, into the garden to fetch his hoe.

Quickly he dug the grave, and as he dug the fowls and little chickens, who had missed their morning feed of corn, gathered round him to see what he turned up for them. It was a pretty spot young missis had selected for her husband's grave, pretty "fe true" Jimmy thought as he dug on.

A couple of blankets were shroud and coffin, good Jimmy was sexton, grave-digger, parson, clerk, chief mourner, only mourner, everybody, at that funeral.

There, all alone, stood the bare-headed, bare-footed, faithful negro, slowly and carefully lowering the body of the master he had dearly loved, and faithfully served, for seven happy years, into the

grave he had just dug, and as he said the only requiem he knew, "May him garn to him rest," heart-rung tears poured down his sable cheeks and watered the ground.

Jimmy replaced the earth very quickly, for he knew that, at any moment, he might be surprised at his task, and he had other work to do here.

He next went in search of the clothes he was to carry to Nana, collected them, tied them in a bundle and hid the bundle behind the fence.

Then he opened the store in order to get provisions. After this he hoped to find and milk the cow and goat, they having been let out yesterday before the family left Woodlands. There was not much bread that he could take, for only two loaves were left. They baked at home, and to-day would have been baking day. He was sorry for this, as the children liked bread, and it would not be easy to cook them vegetables in the bush. There was a little cold beef, not very much, for at day-clean this morning Jimmy would have been on his way to Kingston market to buy meat for to-day's late dinner; but there were plenty of other things if Jimmy had only time to gather them together, and carry them to the bush: ham, tongue, tins of meat and fish, pots of preserves, heads of yams, hands of plantain, bunches of bananas, oranges gathered yesterday from the trees,—if only some one had remained faithful to help him carry up these things, how much he could take! They might return to-morrow from the bush, but Jimmy could not tell; they might be kept there for days, and if so, then how were they all to live?

Poor Jimmy was very hungry himself now, but he would not wait to eat anything until he had packed a basket of provisions.

At the bottom of the basket he put a bottle of brandy in case of sickness, then came the bread, then the beef, and then he paused.

What was that sound he heard in the distance, that sound of voices, of high chattering, that came nearer every instant?

He could not, for a second, doubt what the talking meant, whose were the voices to which he listened in mute horror.

The rebels were at hand. They were making for Woodlands, and might be in the house almost before he could get out of it.

CHAPTER VI.

REBELS IN POSSESSION.

HE snatched up the precious basket containing the few things he had collected, and made his escape round the back of the house. He might save himself this way, but it was his only chance.

Fortunately his bundle was behind the fence at the back of the house, so he could get at this again.

Crouching behind the creeper-covered fence he opened his bundle once more and placed within it the basket of provisions, as he could carry one package better than two. Then he hid the bundle once again.

From his place of concealment he could see and hear most that was going on.

The rebels did not seem to be hurrying themselves, for they had not yet come through the inner gate. If they chose a back entrance to the house Jimmy would be a dead man within a few moments.

He waited in great dread to hear what they would do. The little bell on the gate rang; they had passed through it; were in the garden, looking at the newly-dug grave; were there speaking to one another, and then "Tank God!" Jimmy muttered, for they went into the house through the drawing-room porch.

They passed on from room to room, and he could

see them every now and then at the open windows; about thirty men were there armed with cutlasses and having terribly ferocious faces.

Some of the men he knew well, for till within four-and-twenty hours they had been young Mar'sa's property, his fellow-servants.

But even their faces were changed since they had sold themselves to this horrible rebellion work.

They all seemed to be speaking at once. Were they men or fiends who were thus clamouring for blood, for white man's blood, or the blood of those men of their own race and colour who were giving the white man protection?

They looked in every room of the house, and when they could find no one, they remembered that they were hungry and searched for food. Jimmy saw them go into the store, heard them there ransack everything and then return to the dining-room laden with food, where they sat down to eat it. Some went to the wine-cellar, fetching from thence bottles of wine and spirit.

Jimmy heard a clatter of plates and knives and forks, for the men had taken these from the pantry, and then he knew that they were feasting as hard as they could.

How he hated, how he loathed his own race, his colour, his countrymen, if this were how they treated Buckra!

Jimmy was very glad that he had made Pedro stay behind to guard his mistress. If he had come with him, he would now have flown at these men and have thus betrayed him, without being able to

do any good, for what was one brave dog against thirty cutlasses? the thirty men, if unarmed, he might have terrified and mastered, for bad men are always cowards, and black men are nearly always afraid of dogs.

Jimmy knew that if he wished to preserve his own life he must leave these men to feast on the good fare he had counted on taking to his mistress, who at best had but a very poor appetite, and only carry back to the fugitives in the bush, herself, her little ones, and poor Nana and Thoney, the little he had already collected for them.

As the rebels grew noisier and noisier, enjoying to the full the feast they were sharing, Jimmy crawled along the ground dragging his bundle with him, until he was out of sight of the house. Then he stood erect, put the bundle on to his head, and scrambling through the bush made the best of his way to the mango tree.

He felt very hungry, tired, anxious, and disappointed. He had really had nothing to eat, worth speaking of, for twenty-four hours, but he did not trouble for himself.

He was only sorry to have been able to bring so little away with him.

He walked quickly, and as he hurried on, he thanked God with upraised hands, that his young missis and the pick'ninnies were out of the clutches of those ruffians.

If they had been at Woodlands now, oh! Jimmy shuddered to think what might have been the fearful consequences.

He took long footsteps, eager as soon as possible to rejoin the rest of the party.

Young missis, he knew, would be wondering what had become of him, Nana would be thinking he was very long, and Mars' Meyrick, and Miss Meta would be hungry for breakfast. Nana had biscuits and milk enough, at present, for the twins ; he had not been able to milk either goat or cow, but he had done his very best, and was grateful to have been able to bring even a breakfast away with him.

"Dem greedy black neggars, dem nyam everything," Jimmy kept on saying to himself, as he walked along ; but anger towards the rebels could not mend matters—it could not take from them the stolen food they were enjoying, nor could it give good Jimmy any more to carry to the poor little fatherless English children, and their mother, driven so ruthlessly and cruelly, from their pretty, once happy, home to seek shelter and protection in the bush, under the shadow of the leaves of a mango tree.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST BREAKFAST IN THE BUSH.

"HULLOA! Jimmy, got back again," cried Meyrick, as he, the first to catch sight of the man, ran a little way to meet him, holding out his hand, as he said, to help him along.

"Tank you, Mars' Meyrick," answered Jimmy.

"What about father?" then whispered the boy. "Mother's been telling us how he's gone to Heaven, and that you've been to put him in a grave. Have you done it, Jimmy? Mother's been longing for you to come back to say you had done it all right; she's said ever so often 'I wish Jimmy would come.'"

"Bury him day-clean, Mars' Meyrick."

"Poor father," said the little boy with feeling.

"Oh Jimmy, mother's been crying so much since you've been gone, she is so unhappy, and Meta and I have been crying too, and once, when mother wasn't looking, Nana cried. But haven't you brought us anything to eat, Jimmy?" the child then asked quickly, "we are so hungry you know."

By this time they had reached the spot where Mabel Cleveland sat.

She was in exactly the same position as when

Jimmy went away, with one exception. Sydney was awake and she was nursing him.

Jimmy wondered if she had sat there thinking all the time.

She looked up very eagerly, and before she could speak, her eyes had asked Jimmy to tell her all about it.

"Me bury young Mar'sa a'ready," he said, "in same place young Missis chiced, and no one trouble him. When me get dere Mar'sa an' home jest like when we garn 'way from it, but young Mar'sa look more handsome, 'cause him hab no pain more."

"Thank you, Jimmy," said his grateful mistress, "God bless you for this;" and as she spoke her eyes filled with tears, tears such as we only sometimes shed, so wrung from the heart that they cause real bodily pain to our eyes, as they force themselves into their sockets, and she put out her hand to grasp Jimmy's hand.

As the delicate white fingers pressed the black hand very gratefully, its owner looked down suddenly for he could feel (and this caused him fresh sorrow and anxiety) that his mistress had fever.

"Then we need not really have come away?" she said.

Jimmy answered by telling her all that had taken place at Woodlands that morning, whilst Nana was meanwhile unfastening the bundle, with Meyrick and Meta clustering round her to see what was inside of it.

But Meyrick was back at his mother's side in time to hear a good deal about the rebels.

Jimmy's story shocked his mistress very much. True, the worst that could come had come, but she did not like to hear of her pretty house, in which *he* had lived, and only yesterday died, being invaded by these ruffians, and she was very anxious about provisions for her children and faithful servants, whom she knew must be very hungry now.

"That food will not last long," she said, as Nana spread it out upon leaves on the ground, and Meyrick and Meta were put to keep the ants from off it; "but it was very clever and good of you to bring this," she added, "I suppose we shall not be here much longer."

All but one partook, with appetite, of Jimmy's meal. The children were very hungry, the servants had well earned their breakfast, but poor mother ate only one little biscuit.

"Arn't you hungry, mother?" asked Meta, coaxingly, but mother shook her head.

"Pedro is this morning," said Meta, "look at him;" and as the child spoke, she handed the great dog the whole of the piece of bread that Nana had cut for her, which he took greedily.

Pedro and Meta were great friends. The dog seemed very sad this morning, and he and the little girl had sat together, for some little time, a few yards away from everybody else, Meta comforting Pedro by stroking his head with her little velvetty hand, as he must have thought it.

Mrs. Cleveland told everybody to make a good breakfast, and Nana, to whom Jimmy had brought some tea and sugar, got Thoney to lay sticks to-

gether, one across another, between large stones, and then to light a fire, on which they boiled some water to make their mistress some tea in a large tin mug, for they had no teapot.

"Is it not fun, mother, having breakfast in the bush?" asked Meyrick. "Jimmy, tell us again about the rebels that have got into Woodlands," he then said, speaking to the man, who with Thoney stood behind the children, waiting on them, and eating as they were commanded, at the same time, some bread and meat, missing very much their yams, and other vegetables to which they were so well accustomed.

"What should you think they'll do when they've had their breakfast?"

"Stop an' nyam supper."

"And after that?"

"Me go hear dis evening," said Jimmy, "when de sun set. Den me listen at de window."

"But suppose they see you, Jimmy?"

"Him mustn't, me hab fe hide."

"It would not be safe for you to go, Jimmy," said his mistress; "some harm might happen to you."

Jimmy told her that some good might come to her and to the children if he went, but she still objected.

However Jimmy had made up his mind to go, and would not be dissuaded from doing so.

"Then Thoney must go with you," said Mabel Cleveland.

"Thoney stay and mind de Missis," said Jimmy; "me no garn long time."

And towards nightfall Jimmy really went again to Woodlands to see how matters stood, and to fetch more provisions if this were possible. He was a brave man and willing to brook the dangers of the night alone because he was a good man also. Not one of the rebels dared have ventured out alone at night!

The weary afternoon wore on, Mabel Cleveland helping Nana to nurse the twins, showing no real partiality, nursing them both in turn, amusing them as they sat beside her, only gazing very, very lovingly at little Syd, because she thought him so very like his father and because he bore his Christian-name.

Then the twins wanted to move about a little, so their mother arose from her ground seat and walked gently with Nana, up and down in the shade, to give the children pleasure, but nowhere was the shade so pleasant as under Jimmy's selected tree.

It was nearly three o'clock—dinner-time, for which meal Jimmy and Nana had put by part of the beef. The cloth of leaves was spread again, but Meyrick and Meta, instead of crowding round it as they did at breakfast, sat one on each side of their mother to try to comfort her, because she had been crying again.

"I think, mother, you could eat just this little sandwich that Nana has cut you," said Meyrick, "it looks very tempting."

He spoke so like his father, that his mother, in spite of her own inclination not to do so, took it and began to eat it.

The twins were sitting up in the basket in which Jimmy had brought the provisions. This would make a useful bush-cradle.

"The sandwich is very good, isn't it?" asked Meta.

Mrs. Cleveland put her arm round her little girl and drew her closer to her, but she could not speak.

Nana was a great comfort to her mistress, who was now feeling very ill. Her head ached terribly, she had had fever upon her for several hours, and Nana was very anxious in consequence, for instead of diminishing, it now increased.

The babies seemed very well, but then children are often stronger than grown up people, and they had been well covered over all night.

The bush was no place for a Buckra lady.

How Nana, how Jimmy, how Thoney, how every honest, well-thinking black man or woman must have blushed for comrades who could have driven her, and so many other English ladies and children to such a hiding-place from them and their brutalities!

Jimmy and Thoney went to gather herbs with which to make some fever-tea for their missis to drink, and they also picked grenadilla leaves, which they laid on her head and hands and feet to try to allay the fever.

But before they gave her this tea they persuaded her to lie, for a short time, in the hammock to rest until the children were ready to go to bed.

She did not leave the hammock again that night, for the fever-tea sent her to sleep, and by the time

she awoke, Nana and Thoney had put the children all to bed between wraps on the ground, and they told her that it would be as dangerous for them to be moved now as for herself.

When she first awoke the children were all fast asleep, Pedro was lying on the foot of the wrap that covered Meta, Nana was standing beside the hammock, not thinking of sleep, and Thoney was a short distance away from the group smoking his pipe on watch.

Jimmy had started some time since on his night expedition to Woodlands.

Poor Nana knew that her mistress would require great care that night, and she resolved to give her all the care and attention that she could, which she did, fanning her hot face and changing, from time to time, the fever allaying leaves as they ceased to be cool.

Again the candle-flies had afforded all the children great pleasure before they went to sleep, looking, Meta thought, prettier and prettier as they flew here and there in greater and greater numbers through the trees and bush.

But poor Nana passed a terribly anxious night, longing for Jimmy to return, who, she knew, was in the greatest possible danger.

Every time her mistress awoke she asked the same question "Has Jimmy come back?" and the same answer had each time to be given to her, "No."

During this night Thoney again procured milk, and Nana was very glad to have this when he brought it

to her, for she gave some to her mistress, every now and then, mixed with a little water, to quench her burning thirst, and some to the twins.

The precious life of her mistress she knew now to be in great danger.

CHAPTER VIII.

JIMMY AND THE REBELS.

JIMMY was meanwhile back again at Woodlands, and stationed, for the second time, behind the fence, a few yards away from the house.

He wished, before taking any steps, to ascertain first what the rebels were about.

The clatter of plates still went on, the men's voices were louder than before, but some of them were hushed.

The rebels were now evidently at dinner.

Jimmy could hear a part of their conversation, but not enough to satisfyhim; so, as it was now quite dark, he thought he would venture nearer, and climbing over the fence at a point where he could not be seen from any of the dining-room windows, he went up to one very softly, a little to the right of which he then stood.

This was a most perilous position, for the window was wide open, and if he had once been spied there could be no escape for him.

One thing Jimmy could tell by the sound of the rebels' voices, more than half of them were quite drunk, the rest were on their way to be so, whilst the most sober amongst them were making arrangements for themselves and the others.

They would all move on to-night, make themselves masters without delay of some other Buckra houses, and then return to take possession of this one. Robert Crosdale should be master here (Crosdale was the chief speaker) but they were all to have a great house of their own, and the white ladies and children, who had escaped, were to be sought for, found and brought back to be made their wives and servants.

Jimmy listened and pressed his teeth together with rage.

He thought these rebels spoke very confidently. His Missis found by these men indeed! He knew that his Mar'sa would have told him rather to shoot her than that this should be.

Bottles were still being uncorked, wine and spirits, of which these negroes did not know the strength, were being freely imbibed, and, one by one, at last, they all left off speaking to fall asleep.

But before there was silence in that dining-room where so often Jimmy's poor dead Mar'sa and family had partaken of their meals together, he heard the ruffians now occupying it speak of that Mar'sa. Some of the old property servants said that when they last saw him he was "well bad," and they thought he must be buried in the grave outside. They supposed "young Missis and de pick'ninnies" had been hidden by Jimmy and Thoney, and they guessed it was somewhere up by the woodside. They were not far out in this supposition.

Jimmy now listened very attentively. When they came back, they said they would hunt well for the

party and as soon as they found them, shoot Jimmy Grant and Thoney like hogs!

Jimmy held his breath. They were moving about the room and might be either walking towards his window, or coming out upon him through the glass door.

It was very dark, but still if they came out darkness would not help him, and if they killed him there would be no one left to go back and warn young Missis of the threatened danger. The walking soon ceased. They seemed to have been putting more bottles on to the table, for Jimmy heard more uncorking, then renewed clatter and breaking of glasses, but soon no sound was to be heard but that of snoring, and Jimmy thought the men *must* be all asleep!

He knew that black men, at all times, were heavy sleepers, and he now felt tempted to go into the store to see what they had left.

The store was out of doors, and if he went quietly to work he thought that none of them would be disturbed or hear him. But he felt that he dared not strike a light, for fear the men were not all in the dining-room, and the worst of it was that they were sure to have left everything in great confusion, and if he tripped over anything or knocked it down he might make a great noise.

As soon as he began to feel about, he knew that everything was disarranged, but the store seemed almost empty. He found one tin of meat, a box of matches, some coffee, sugar, a can of lamp oil and two candles, also a good sized boat-shaped basket hanging by a handle from a hook in the store. The tin, coffee, sugar, oil and candles he put into the basket,

which he carried to his hiding-place behind the fence, the matches he put into his pocket. He was very glad to have found the oil for Nana's lamp, but he wished he had found more boxes of matches. He knew that men of his colour could eat hard when they set about it, so he was not surprised to find the store apparently so empty of provisions, but food for his mistress and the children he must have, if any food remained, so now he resolved to go into the dining-room there to hunt for it.

He had felt everywhere in the store for the biscuit-tin, but that had been bodily removed. As he looked into his Missis' pretty dining-room what a horrible sight met his view!

Thirty men were there lying on the floor quite drunk, bottles were strewn about everywhere, and broken glasses were lying on the table.

Jimmy then went in and at once caught sight of two unopened tins of preserved meat and some cooked yam, which the rebels had not been able to finish. These were on the table, but the difficulty was to reach them through the outstretched bodies of the sleeping ruffians on the floor.

He leant over one man and procured the yams. These he carried to his basket. Then he returned, and with still greater difficulty reached the tins of meat. These were also taken to the fence.

Jimmy saw the biscuit-tin, but it was empty. Still, many biscuits were scattered about the room, if he could only collect some of these. He picked up as many as he could, and then carried them, with a

small tin mug which he was very glad to find, to his hiding-place.

He felt that he must not return to the dining-room much oftener, as it might be nearly time for some of the men, who had first fallen asleep, to awaken.

He had seen, however, some uncorked bottles, one of wine, and another of rum, and these he wished to take away with him. Twice more he had to return to the dining-room to procure them. Very, very thankful did he feel as he packed securely his basket behind the fence, but one more venture he would make.

Candles burnt in the dining-room, spirit was spilt about the table, supposing these candles burnt too low or were upset, and the spirit caught fire, Woodlands might suffer. Should he risk so much, should Jimmy, before he went away, blow out the candles and leave the men in darkness, so as to make sure that he left Woodlands safe?

The brave man considered for a moment, and then he put out every candle but one. This one he carried in his hand so as to get safely outside, and the drunken rebels slept on in darkness.

Jimmy then went into the kitchen-garden, and with the hoe which he had used so often, dug a head of yam; with his knife he cut a hand or bunch of plantains and a bunch of bananas.

He did not see the cow or goat to milk, but this did not matter, as Thoney would, in all probability, get some milk.

Jimmy's basket was as full as it could be, so full

that had he not found some string attached to it, with which he tied the things together, some might have dropped out as he walked slowly away from the fence with it on his head.

But Jimmy had not yet got everything that he wanted. As he passed the fowl-house he took from off the roost a good, fat chicken, holding it by its neck that it should not cackle. This would be nice for young Missis. If he had thought, he would have tried to take her up a little teapot in which to make her tea, but Jimmy never thought of this. How could he think of everything ?

No one would complain this time when he arrived back at the mango tree. Of this he was very certain, and far happier than on his return journey from Woodlands in the morning, did Jimmy feel as once more he left Woodlands house behind, and walked briskly through the property towards the spot where those were sheltered for whom he had risked so much.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THREATENING SKY.

STEPS were approaching, this was certain, for Pedro, who had been fast asleep, pricked up his ears, rose suddenly and wagged his tail.

They must be the footsteps of a friend, too, or he would have barked.

This Nana thought as she stood beside her mistress' hammock and watched the faithful dog.

No one else could hear a sound. The tread of bare feet makes little noise.

Pedro then started off and ran some little distance. Nana was pleased, for it was as she had hoped. Pedro a few minutes later brought back Jimmy, whose approach he had heard, and whom he had gone to meet.

Mabel Cleveland opened her eyes before Jimmy reached the hammock on which she lay dozing.

"Is that you, Jimmy?" she asked in a very feeble voice. "Oh, I am so glad you have come back safely; are they still there?"

"Still dere, young Missis," he answered, not wishing to talk much to his mistress now, for Nana told him, and he could see for himself, that she ought to be kept very quiet.

But Mrs. Cleveland cross-questioned him till he was obliged to tell her a good deal that he had seen that evening.

Her nerves were thoroughly unstrung, and she had caught a very severe chill.

Nana knew her symptoms only too well, and continued to brew and administer fever-tea from time to time throughout the night.

She was very ill, with a burning fever upon her one minute, and an attack of shivering ague the next.

Neither Jimmy nor Thoney liked the look of the sky.

"Rain nearly down," they whispered to one another, as they sat a little apart from the mango tree shelter, drinking a little rum and water, and eating some of the cooked yam Jimmy had brought back with him. His mistress had insisted upon his going at once to have something to eat, and he and Thoney preferred yam then to anything else.

Nothing but a good junk of yam, Jimmy felt, could satisfy his hunger.

The men mixed Nana also a little rum and water, and made her eat something.

They were quite sure that she must be as hungry as they were. She had given her mistress some brandy and water every now and then during the night, knowing that had a doctor been there he would have ordered this.

Nana had altogether a most trying night, for the twins were wakeful and fretful, having slept a good had deal during the day.

How often she missed the nursemaids who had had

nothing else to do at Woodlands but to wait upon her and the children! They had both turned traitoresses and run away last Wednesday, that fatal, miserable rebellion-day.

It was day-clean again, and Meyrick and Meta were up and about.

Mrs. Cleveland had risen, too, from her hammock-bed. The fever had left her, but she looked dreadfully weak. The two elder children were now sitting close beside her, each with a little arm thrown round her waist, Francis was on his mother's lap. He was very hot this morning, as though he too were threatened with an attack of fever. Meyrick's curls looked very rough and untidy. They could not be dressed properly in the bush, and directly Nana had some scissors they were now to come off, without waiting for the birthday three weeks hence.

"Mother darling," said Meyrick, "Jimmy has brought us lots to eat, wasn't it just brave of him to get it?"

"Very brave," was his mother's answer.

"And Jimmy and Thoney are getting some of it ready for us," said Meta, "and Thoney fetched a great deal of milk for 'the twins' in the night."

Meyrick and Meta were both very fond of calling their little baby brothers "the twins."

"And you'll eat something this morning, mother, won't you?" asked Meyrick, "and drink something too, because Jimmy has brought some coffee with him, and you always like coffee."

She tried to smile at her children's eagerness, but tears came into her eyes instead of smiles upon her

face. Poor pets, how little they really realized and understood what had befallen them!

The whole group now congregated round Mrs. Cleveland. Meyrick was on one side of her, Meta on the other. Nana and Syd beside Meta, and Pedro was on the other side of Meyrick.

Breakfast was ready, and Jimmy and Thoney handed it round.

Meyrick said it was not early tea this morning, but breakfast and early tea all in one.

The children had regular bush appetites, and enjoyed thoroughly the biscuits, and beef from the tin, which Jimmy had opened for them.

Little Syd ate a little with his brother and sister; Francis took nothing but his milk. Fortunately there was enough of this for the four children to have some, but most was given this morning to Francis. Pedro was also very hungry for his breakfast.

Throughout the meal, Jimmy glanced most uneasily up at the threatening sky, and directly it was over and cleared away, and in obedience to his mistress' commands, who herself had tasted very little again, he and Thoney had made a good breakfast themselves, Jimmy went to Nana for a bundle of wraps which he had asked her to make up for him at once.

If the rain came down in October, the rainy season, they might expect very heavy showers.

It would be impossible for the family to remain here. Thoney, in his rambles, had seen a cave, this he and Jimmy thought might do for a temporary hiding-place, and Jimmy was now off there to

see it, carrying wraps with him, so that if he settled to take his mistress to this cave, he could leave them there and then hasten back to fetch her and the rest of the party.

Should the rebels also seek the Cleveland family, as they threatened, they would be much less likely to find them in the cave than under the mango tree.

Again Jimmy walked very fast, and as the cave to which Thoney had directed him was not far distant, he soon reached the spot.

He saw a hole, or small opening, in the rock, through which he was just able to walk. Going in, he was astonished at the size of the interior of the cave, for through a strange projection of the rock it consisted of two compartments.

Jimmy remembered now that he had heard of this cave before, although he had never seen it.

He unfastened his bundle, spread out several wraps upon the dust floor, to be ready to receive his mistress, and then he hurried back to bring her and her children hither.

Thoney and Nana had the other two bundles ready, but only one could be carried then, the second was left behind, covered over with a waterproof, until Thoney could come back for it. Jimmy had killed his fowl, and this they took with them that Mrs. Cleveland might have some fowl soup so soon as the servants could get it ready for her.

Jimmy and Thoney carried the hammock, their mistress this time lying in it, for she was too weak to be moved any other way. Nana carried one baby. Francis was with his mother in the hammock. The

two elder children walked. The bundle was also in the hammock.

It was difficult walking, for in some places there was no pathway whatever, and every now and then the bush was almost impassable. Meyrick led Meta and followed close behind the hammock, Nana coming behind them. She had one hand free, so she could help Meta along from time to time.

They passed several little streams, but they were so shallow that the children could jump the stones and thus cross them.

Meyrick crossed all alone; Nana generally helped Meta over the water.

The party had journeyed for nearly three-quarters of an hour, the last stream was crossed, a very clear one that would be most convenient, to serve as a bath for the children, and also to afford water to drink, for only a few yards beyond the stream was the mouth of the cave.

CHAPTER X.

"TAKE CARE OF META."

JIMMY waited a moment to let Nana pass into the cave to put Syddy down upon the bed of wraps, which he had there roughly prepared.

Francis was quite his mother's boy to-day, because he was not well.

Meyrick and Meta followed into their new home, Meta, like a good girl, beginning at once to amuse little Syd. Then Nana took Francis out of the hammock and carried him to his brothers and sister.

Last of all she helped in their mother, who was so weak that Jimmy and Thoney had almost to lift her out of the hammock.

She sat down upon the wraps—her two elder children, as usual, soon coming round to fondle her.

Poor, weary, heart-broken woman! She looked indeed very weary of her trials; these few days of endless hardships had been "quite too much" for her, as Jimmy said.

Thoney ran back at once to fetch the rest of the things; saying it would not take him long to scramble through the bush alone.

The air was very close within the cave, but fortunately the rain still held up, so the children could be in the shade outside.

Never before had the voices of her own children sounded so unmusical in Mabel Cleveland's ears as they did to-day.

Her head ached so terribly that she could not endure the slightest sound.

The crying and cooing of the babies almost drove her mad, and the gentle talking of Meyrick and Meta—and it was gentle talking, for they were feeling children and knew that mother was ill—caused her to put her hand to her head and say that they must be quiet.

The fever returned, the weakness increased, Nana again made fever-tea, and her mistress drank it, but without the desired effect. There were no signs of a perspiration coming to displace the fever. The dry heat of her skin became drier and more intensely hot. She would not eat. She craved for drink. Fever-tea, weak brandy and water, and water, Nana handed her in turn.

Jimmy amused the children outside. They were now all four with him under a tree in the shade. He was collecting faggots of wood for a fire. Meyrick was very useful in finding good, large faggots for him, but the children all helped. Even the twins handed Jimmy every now and then a tiny twig, which they picked up where they sat, and when the man lighted the fire Francis quite forgot his ill-humour, so interested was he in watching it burn.

Then Jimmy brought his fowl, with which he made

some very good soup, for his mistress later really to enjoy.

The meat from it she wished the children and servants to have for their dinner. The twins had some broth with their mother. It was only a taste of anything that they could have in the way of solids, but Nana was very glad now that she had taught them to have these tastes, and like whatever she thought fit to give them to eat. When the night came again, the candles that Jimmy had brought from Woodlands proved very useful inside the cave.

The children were all put to bed early, so that their mother might have quiet and peace within the dismal cavern, where often during that night there was no sound to be heard but that of her own heavy breathing. Fever and ague, ague and fever visited her in turn, and throughout the night she was seldom conscious.

"Sydney," she said once, very distinctly, "oh Nana, take care of him."

Did she dream that her husband was alive and wounded, and refer to him? or did she hear and recognize the cry of the father's little namesake who had just awakened, and speak of him?

It was now the night of Friday the 13th of October, the third night that had been passed by Mrs. Cleveland and her family away from home.

Jimmy, Thoney and Nana were all very busy, the men gathering so many grenadilla leaves for their mistress, that her whole bed, such as it was, was kept covered with them, and getting milk which every night was more difficult to obtain, although Thoney

milked whatever goat he could find, considering everything fair in war. To-night, returning with his milk, he was able to gather some limes and a few oranges; these he took to the cave very gladly, as they would make a cooling, refreshing drink.

Nana had a little sugar left, but unfortunately not very much.

The poor woman knew, as she watched through that terrible night of anxiety, that if a change did not come soon, there could be no hope of her mistress' recovery, and towards early morning the only change was one for the worse.

"Are you better, darling mother?" asked Meta, as soon as Nana had quickly bathed in the stream and dressed the child; "Nana says you are very sick." She shook her head, but she did not speak—only pointed to two oranges, meaning that they were for herself and Meyrick.

"Isn't mother a bit better?" then asked the little boy.

"No," answered Meta, "not yet, Meyrick, so we must be very quiet again," she whispered.

Mrs. Cleveland took a chubby little hand of each of theirs and kissed it.

She spoke to them a little but could not say much. It was very early in the morning, but Nana told them that as the rain was still not down, they had better go outside and get some air, and let as much as possible come into the cave to their mother whom she was now fanning.

"Get better quick, mother darling," said Meyrick coaxingly.

"Yes," said Meta too.

Mabel Cleveland kissed her children very lovingly, tears filling her pretty eyes, and then she told them to be good.

"Take care of Meta, my little son," she added, as a second time she kissed her handsome little boy.

"All right, mother," was his reply, as with Meta he went out very quietly to help Thoney, as they said, see about breakfast presently, and to bring mother's in to her if she could not come out for it.

Nana had given them each a biscuit to eat with their orange.

"*Every* body tells me to take care of you, Meta," Meyrick said gravely, but he did not think quite so much of his mother having said this as his father having spoken the same words to him, because he knew, he said, that he would see his mother and that she would often speak to him again, but those were the last words that his father had ever said to him. Presently Mrs. Cleveland seemed a trifle better and asked for her babies to be brought to her. Jimmy was minding them, so Nana beckoned to him to bring them in.

"What sorrow, Nana," their poor mother exclaimed, "but thank God still for His mercies, for your love and care, for that of poor Jimmy and Thoney. His will be done, as *he* would have told me to say, a Father cannot willingly afflict His children."

"My pretty babies," she then added, as they were held for her to kiss. "Oh Nana, if I die, you and Jimmy will take care of my poor children, won't you? Little Syd *will* be like his father when he grows up, but shall *I* see him then I wonder?"

After a very short time she asked Jimmy to take the babies out again.

Nana gave her some chicken-broth, of which there was still some left, Jimmy having kept it for her in a cool place.

She seemed very tired, and directly after she took the broth went to sleep again.

Meyrick and Meta kept on coming on tip-toe to the mouth of the cave "to peep," they said, "how mother was," but she was asleep each time they came, so they were sent away.

Mrs. Cleveland's was a strange sick-room; it had stone walls and ceiling, a dust floor, no window, and only a small opening cut, as it were, in the rock to act as door and lead out of the cave into the bush.

Once Meyrick and Meta came in and knelt down quietly on the floor very gently, to kiss mother again, but she slept so soundly that she did not kiss them in return. They seemed very restless, the new life without toys and books was very strange to them. Meyrick *knew* that his mother would often speak to him again. This the little boy had said.

How little Meyrick knew, how little any of us know in this world of sorrow and change, what we shall do, who we shall see again, whose voice will once more sound in our listening ears, if we go out from a loved one's presence for ever so short a time!

We know nothing; God knows all for us, and we must trust Him.

CHAPTER XI.

CHILD-SORROW IN THE CAVE.

"WHAT a nice long sleep mother is having," Meyrick said, as he began to amuse himself by killing lizards for Meta, who did not like them.

"Isn't it a good thing?" said Meta, "because then she'll be better soon."

At that moment three most faithful attendants were doing all they could, not to alleviate suffering, for no more suffering remained to be alleviated, but to abate the fever that was consuming, and to restore the strength that was wasting their dying mistress.

Her eyes were open but they saw nothing, her lips moved unconsciously but they uttered no audible sound, and but a very few more minutes elapsed before the sweet, calm, gentle spirit of the widowed mother passed away to join, in a happier world him from whom she had been separated so short a time.

But her poor little children! Fatherless, motherless! bush-fugitives from rebels! God help them, and He *will*. "Leave thy fatherless children to Me, I will preserve them alive."

The worst that could happen to these poor little English children, till so lately cradled and reared in

comfort and luxury, happened to them in the early morning of the 14th day of October, 1865, in the cave in the bush, when their mother, with all her outcome of fond mother's love, was thence called away from them.

"But I thought she'd soon be well again, didn't you, Meta?" asked Meyrick, when gently and feelingly the heart-broken Nana and Jimmy broke the terrible news to the children, which they knew they must learn at latest in a very few minutes.

"Yes," answered Meta. "Oh mother, mother," and the little girl sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry, Meta," said her brother, sobbing equally bitterly, as he threw his little arm round her neck to comfort her; "don't cry—but we must, mustn't we?" he added, in the same breath.

"Oh, mother dead, too," he then went on, forgetting that he wanted to comfort Meta, but was rather adding to her sorrow, "and she'll never speak to us again, never, never."

"Jimmy says mother has gone to father now," whispered Meta, "but she hasn't quite gone all the way yet, because Jimmy says he is going to bury her to-morrow day-clean; couldn't we ask her to let us go too and be buried?"

"She wouldn't hear," said Meyrick. "People only hear with their souls you know."

"Isn't it with their ears?" asked his sister.

"But you know when they die and their souls go they can't hear, or see, or speak, or do anything more. They've gone then to be with Jesus right away in Heaven."

The children were sitting in the inner cave, where

Nana's lamp was burning as though it were night, for, as if the rain had just waited for poor mother to die, ten minutes after she had passed away a very heavy shower came down.

Jimmy gave the children each a banana, as their breakfast had to be delayed, and he then went into the other division to speak to, and, if he could, help Nana. The twins were asleep in there.

"I don't care for my banana now, do you?" asked Meta.

"No," answered her brother, "but you'd better eat it, perhaps."

The little, dark, sun-burnt face that now looked up was very serious.

"Am I taking care of you, Meta, do you think?" Meyrick asked; "mother said it, too, you know, that I was to take care of you, and I didn't exactly see her again either afterwards, at least she didn't speak to me again."

Little Meta made no answer, she seemed to be deep in thought.

Whatever those sorrowful thoughts of the little girl's were she did not tell them to Meyrick, and both children then sat silently crying until Jimmy came back to them.

Meyrick thought a great deal of these last words that had heen spoken to him by both his parents. That they were last words, made them of double importance.

"Poor pick'ninnies," said Jimmy caressingly, sitting down beside the children.

Meyrick then stood up and, throwing both arms

round the black man's neck, rested his little head on his shoulder.

"Oh, Jimmy," he said, "what shall we do now! We want father and mother so much; couldn't you, please, Jimmy, carry us away with mother to-morrow at day-clean? Those horrid rebels will *kill* us now. Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy, we'd both like to go with mother if you'd take us."

"Jimmy mind you well, Mars' Meyrick, and Miss Meta, too," said the good, kind-hearted man. "No rebels lay hand on me young Marsa's and Missis pick'ninnies afore dem kill Jimmy first, an' de Lord will watch over you, Mars' Meyrick, de Lord who have taken de good Mar'sa an' young Missis to Hisself, an who first send 'em teach Jimmy trust an' lub de Lord, Him'll pervide. You be faderlers an' moderlers now, Mars' Meyrick, an' de good God promise care fe such as you, an' Him never break Him word. Mar'sa teach me one day: "when my fader an' moder forsake me, de Lord him de one fe to take me up," an' it's forsaken fe true when de two good parents both garn way, but Mars' Meyrick an Miss Meta, de great God above 'll pervide, an' 'tank God for every ting' young Mar'sa always learn me say."

"I suppose mother will ask God to take care of us," said Meta, who had dried her tears, and had moved very near to Jimmy, for she too felt a very sore need of love and comfort.

"Yes, an' Him 'll do it without no one reminding Him, for Him our Fader, an Him full o' love for Him pick'ninnies.

"Does mother like to go to Heaven?" asked Mey-

rick, fully confident that Jimmy could answer all his questions satisfactorily.

"Him like do God's will," answered Jimmy, "an' though him not like leave him children behind, him happy fe true go to Heaven to be with de good God an' de Mar'sa again, an' de good God promise em' both now dat Him take good care on 'em pick'ninnies."

"But, Jimmy, we *want* mother," said Meta.

"Us must tank God for everyting, Miss Meta," was all Jimmy's answer, as he looked up very sadly into the little girl's face.

"Jimmy," then said Meyrick, "what does a big person do, you know, one who is grown up, when he wants to take care of anybody?"

"If oder be poor, him gib him money."

Meyrick looked puzzled. He did not know exactly if Meta were poor or not, anyhow she was richer than he was, as he had only twelve shillings in the saving's bank and she had fourteen.

"But what else do they do, Jimmy?"

"Him gib him oder tings, an' if him sick him mind him well."

"But if anybody is not sick?" asked Meyrick.

"Den him gib him plenty eat an' drink," said Jimmy, "if oder no got it, an' good clothes fe put on."

Poor Meyrick gave up questioning Jimmy in despair. He could not take care of Meta in any of these ways, and he did not think it was of any use to ask Jimmy again. He thought perhaps some way would come to take care of Meta if he waited, and looked out for it, and this he resolved to do.

The man saw that his little master and dependant looked disappointed ; then, remembering with affectionate gratitude how very good his dead mar'sa and missis had been to him, he said, " Mars' Meyrick, de best way fe care any one is say kind words to 'em."

" Thank you, Jimmy," said the little boy.

" I thought you did not know any more, so I did not ask you again, but that will do if you don't know anything else."

By now Nana had finished her work in the outer division of the cave, and drying her eyes, she came to the children.

Provisions were getting very scarce again now, and Thoney had gone through the rain up to Jimmy's own ground, there to dig a couple of yam heads.

It was rather far to venture, but hunger must be satisfied somehow, and there was not enough food left to carry them all through the day.

" Me well hungry," poor Thoney had often said since he had lived in the bush.

The twins were now awake. Nana brought them to the other children, and put Syddy to crawl about the floor as he liked. He was just learning to stand when they left Woodlands, so was Francis, but of the two Meyrick declared that Syd was the most forward.

Nana kept Francis in her arms, for he was hot and restless again ; Meta was very glad to see her Nana ; she had asked for her several times and had not liked her to be in a different part of the cave at all. She now sat on her lap with Francis.

Poor little Francis certainly had a touch of fever.

Nana looked at Jimmy. There seemed to be no end to sorrow, trouble and anxiety.

The poor woman felt as her mistress had felt twenty-four hours before, that the worst that could come had come, but she was very, very anxious about these helpless little white children left to her mercy, love and care.

"We want Father and Mother, Nana," Meyrick and Meta both said together. "Oh, what shall we do? Can't you bring mother back, or may Jimmy take us with mother to-morrow?"

It was very pitiful to listen to these little ones giving vent to their great sorrow. Poor Nana was deeply moved, and did all she could to comfort them, but she sorely needed comfort herself.

Where would all this end, she wondered. Was little Francis now seriously ill, too?

She gave him a little fever-tea, which soon made him a little better.

The children had their meals inside the cave to-day on account of the rain.

Their breakfast consisted of roasted plantains.

Jimmy made a fire at the mouth of the cave to roast them, but the children could not see the cooking from where they were.

Thoney was back before dinner, bringing with him some yam heads, a sugar-cane, and a pine-apple.

Jimmy managed out of the fowl-bones to make a little sort of broth to put over the children's yam, and he then cut up part of the pine-apple into thick juicy slices for them.

The servants were quite satisfied to dine off yam.

Then Jimmy gave the children each some sugar-cane. Eating this seemed to amuse them for a little, but they were so very tired and weary, and their little eyes ached so terribly from crying that, soon after dinner, they asked to be allowed to go to their bed of rugs.

They knew that their mother was still in the outer division of the cave, so they both begged to be allowed to wish her "good-night."

She looked very beautiful, more beautiful in death than she had ever looked in life, and the children, who had only once before, when their little sister Amy died, been brought face to face with death, thought it very strange that mother could not speak to them, for they had forgotten a great deal about Amy's death now. Meyrick took Meta's hand, and told her to kneel down and kiss mother, for he was going to. They then kissed their mother together. Jimmy, who was looking on, wiped his eyes.

"You know, Jimmy," said sensible little Meyrick, "mother isn't really here, she's gone to Heaven to God," and the child pointed upwards. "I remember she told us all about that when Amy died, about people going to Heaven."

"Him tell Jimmy, too," he answered.

"Shall we say our prayers just in here to-night, Meta?" asked Meyrick. "I think we'd better, and that mother would like it."

These little ones had not had once to be reminded of their prayers since they fled to the bush.

"You said she couldn't hear us," sobbed Meta.

"P'raps she can," answered her brother. "She's

with God, you know, and p'raps He'll let her listen."

Meyrick then put his little hands together and said his prayers.

His little voice faltered when he prayed to God to make him a very good boy, and Meta a very good girl, and the twins very good, and to take them soon to Heaven, too, as they wanted to go to father and mother, and didn't want to stay here without them, though Jimmy and Nana were very kind to them.

"Pray God," said the child, "let Jimmy tell me another way to take care of Meta, and make me kind to her, and if we don't die make me grow a big boy soon to take care of Syddy and Francis too, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Meta, as she said "Our Father," remembered what Jimmy had said about God being our Father and taking care of us, and her little mind seemed to grasp the truth that God did love her very much, and the words "Our Father" had more meaning for the little girl to-night than they had ever had before, and the poor little bruised child-heart was somewhat comforted as the little lips spoke these words.

CHAPTER XII.

"OH, GOOD-BYE, MOTHER DARLING."

THE following morning it ceased raining for a little time, and at day-break Jimmy and Thoney started to carry their young missis back to her pretty home to bury her.

This time Jimmy could not possibly go alone.

Poor fellow! his heart was sad as he set out.

That it should have come to this. His master and mistress both dead, and he to have had to dig their double grave.

"Oh, take me too, Jimmy," Meyrick pleaded, for both he and Meta were awake and would be up very early that morning. "Oh, Jimmy, do take me; dear, dear, dear mother."

"And me," begged Meta.

"Us couldn't," said Jimmy, "could us, Nana?"

"No," answered the nurse, "you stay with me, Meyrick, and help me mind the others."

"But mother," said the boy. "Oh Nana, mightn't I go just a little way with her; see, it's left off raining."

Nana did not think it wise to say "yes," but had not the heart to say "no" to such earnest pleading.

"Just a few steps, just to the tallest mountain-cabbage-tree," she answered.

"And mayn't I go too?" asked Meta.

"You can't," Meyrick began. He was going to say "you can't go everywhere I go, I'm a boy and you're a girl," but the little fellow remembered, and looking very coaxingly into Nana's face he said, "P'raps Meta wants to go very much, Nana; I don't think it can hurt her, and I'll take care of her, you know, if you say she may."

There was no time for further argument.

Jimmy and Thoney came out of the cave, bearing their sad burden, and the two little mourners fell into rank behind them.

Meta was frightened at she knew not what, and clung to Meyrick for protection, who walked on in silence.

When they reached the tallest mountain cabbage palm tree Jimmy stopped.

"Don't you think we might go just a little farther?" asked Meyrick.

"No, Mars' Meyrick," said the man, "dis far enough."

Meyrick looked round and saw Nana standing outside the cave, crying herself, and beckoning to them. She could not come out because she could not leave the twins, and dared not bring Francis out on this damp morning.

He knew then that he must really go back. "P'raps we'd better go, Meta," he said, "but, Jimmy, ask God to let you take us 'well' soon," he added.

Both children burst into tears as Meyrick said, and

Meta echoed, "Oh, good-bye, mother darling, oh, good—good-bye," and the children turned to walk back alone. Then, again, they stood still and looked longingly after the men.

To have seen these solitary little ones thus sauntering back to the cave, clasped in each other's arms, one might have been somewhat reminded of the babes in the wood; but these children, happily, were unlike those poor little creatures, inasmuch as they were in the hands of those who loved them, not of those who would do them harm.

Poor little children! but the promise extended to them, and was sure of fulfilment in their case as in every other case: "As thy day so shall thy strength be."

Both Meyrick and Meta had to have their boots and socks changed when they got back to Nana, so wet had the heavy fall of rain made the ground.

It was some little time before Jimmy and Thoney reached the shady spot in the garden at Woodlands, selected by Mabel Cleveland a few days ago for the burial-place of her husband, and the rain poured down again before the funeral was over!

Another funeral in so short a time; two grave-diggers to-day, two bare-headed, bare-footed mourners, with very sad and faithful hearts, stood beside that grave so lately dug, so soon re-opened.

Where would it all end, was this the end? It seemed only like a new beginning.

Jimmy could not think out his thoughts, such very strange ones framed themselves in his mind.

How changed were the lives of the little children

who had so often and so very lately played just here; how changed was his life and that of his fellow grave-digger, who had been so happy and so blessed in the service of these two Buckras now lying here in this one grave together; and this and many other miseries had been brought about by a rebellion of rebel negroes!

But Jimmy knew that Nana was alone with the little ones, and that they, their protectors, must hasten back, so he was very quick to-day.

The two men walked hurriedly through the house. The dining-room was in a terrible state of confusion. The night nursery was just as it had been left, and Jimmy snatched up quickly from here a couple of small toys for the twins, a little doll for Meta (he could not see her favourite doll with which she usually played) and from the drawing-room he took a book for Mars' Meyrick, so as to carry back something to the poor children. The twins had fortunately had those toys to play with on the day of the 11th, or they would have been in the day nursery, and Jimmy could not spare time to go there. The men caught two fowls, and then went in search of the goat and her two kids, Jimmy determining this time at all hazards, to take them with them to the cave, should the family have to pass there only one other night.

They were fortunate in soon finding the goat, and then started at once through the pouring rain, on their homeward journey.

They had just turned the corner outside Woodlands' second gate, when suddenly they came upon

a division of white soldiers wrapped in large cloaks, and marching towards the house they had a minute before left.

Thoney at once hoisted a white handkerchief on to a stick he carried so as to proclaim himself a friend, but Jimmy, who was leading the goat, had not been so quick, and the soldiers, the next moment, surrounded him, one grasping him by the neck.

"Us friends," he said, quickly.

"Prove it," cried the soldiers.

"Us come from bury young Missis who die yesterday in bush, and Mar'sa die three days afore, and pick'ninnies now yonder in de bush in cave wid Nana."

The English officers read honesty in the countenance of the black man who spoke to them, saw truth reflected in his eyes, and standing aside they bade him first point out the grave of which he had spoken and then show to two soldiers, who should be told off to go with them, the children now hidden in the bush.

Jimmy and Thoney obeyed, and the soldiers were satisfied.

They gave Nana a loaf of bread for the children, and told her to keep them in the cave until they returned to tell her what was to be done with them.

All was now safe behind, and the regiment was marching on, so no danger from before need be apprehended either.

These were good tidings.

Had they but come sooner, Jimmy thought, with sorrowful regret!

But what was now to happen to these little ones of whom he, Nana, and also Thoney, were so fond?

Would the white soldiers come and take the children away from them to whose protection their own mother had committed them, and send them somewhere, perhaps to England, where Mars' Meyrick would want Jimmy to love and play with him, but would never see him again, and where little Miss Meta would have no Nana to love and "care" for her.

This was what Jimmy feared might happen, and he and Nana could give the children pleasure in many little ways.

Meta was delighted with her doll, and Meyrick could not thank Jimmy enough, he said, for his favourite picture history-book that he had been so good as to think to bring him from Woodlands.

CHAPTER XIII.

META'S DISPOSITION.

"WHAT am I thinking about, Meta?" Meyrick asked his sister, as the two children sat together in the doorway of the cave, Meyrick with his book in his hands, Meta with her doll, an hour after the soldiers had left, "what should you say I am thinking about?"

Meta looked up with a puzzled expression on her little face.

"About the soldiers?" she asked.

"No."

"About what they said?"

"No, not anything about the soldiers."

"About mother and father?" she asked, her little lips quivering as she spoke the sacred names.

"No, I did not mean that; I've thought of them nearly all day though, but what am I thinking of just now?"

"Tell me," pleaded Meta.

"Guess again," said Meyrick; "Jimmy's black you know, so are Nana and Thoney, and we're white, but we didn't paint our faces, and they didn't paint theirs."

"Was that what you were thinking about?" asked Meta.

"No, that's just to help you; haven't you guessed yet?"

"I can't," said Meta.

"Well, I'll help you more. Havn't we got a funny house, but there's no wall round it outside, and there arn't any wolves here—what was I thinking about now?"

"I don't know," was still Meta's answer, "wasn't that it?"

"Not exactly, but you ought to guess now; don't you think you must be very stupid, I do, not to guess after my telling you nearly all of it?"

"But it's so hard to guess when you never tell me," said the little girl, in a dreadfully aggrieved tone of voice; "tell me *first*, Meyrick."

"Well," said the boy, "of course I was thinking that we had a house now something like the ancient Britons I used to read to mother about in this book, because sometimes they lived in caves, you know, and their caves might have been just like this one."

"It was too difficult to guess," said Meta.

"But when I told you that we didn't paint our faces, that should have helped you, because the ancient Britons used to paint their skins blue, mustn't they have looked funny? Look, here's a picture of them in my book."

"They couldn't have liked their houses very much," suggested Meta, looking at the picture of her savage ancestors that Meyrick now showed to her.

"Oh, yes, I guess they did," replied her brother,

and they must have felt so safe with walls all round them, but I suppose they hadn't walls round their caves, only round their wooden huts, but then of course they had a father and mother, so that would make them like their houses."

"Had they?" asked Meta.

She seemed to have implicit confidence in all that Meyrick told her, and never questioned whether by using that wide-spreading personal pronoun "they" her brother meant to infer that no ancient Briton ever lost a parent.

But Meta was not as fond of history as Meyrick, who used at Woodlands to read in this book, over and over again, about the ancient Britons, and how brave they were when Julius Cæsar came over to fight and try to conquer them, so she only cared for Meyrick now to tell her about anything in his book that had a picture for him to show her, as well as the reading.

"What are the soldiers going to do to us, Meyrick?" asked the little girl when her brother showed her a picture of some soldiers.

"Nothing," answered Meyrick; "do you think, indeed, that Jimmy and Nana would let them touch us?"

"But they said we weren't to go away till they came back again; why did they say that?"

"I don't know; we'll ask Nana when she comes back." Nana had gone to get some water from the stream. The twins were very good just now. Syddy was playing with both the toys and Francis was asleep.

"The soldiers won't do anything to us, will they,

Nana?" asked Meyrick, who was generally spokesman, as their nurse came in with her water.

"Not if I can help it," she answered.

"Oh but, Nana, you will help it then won't you, you and Jimmy and Thoney?" they both cried out. "Oh Nana, don't let them take us away, we should cry if they did," and the very thought of the strange men having anything to do with, or to say to, them brought all the children's recent sorrows back to their memories, opened their little wounded hearts once more and made them shed bitter tears.

"Yes, Jimmy, Thoney, and me'll help it somehow," said the good-hearted woman, as she dried the children's tears, telling them that as it had left off raining, they might put on their hats and walk along the stones that Jimmy had arranged for them outside, and go and look for him and ask if dinner would not be ready soon.

Jimmy and Thoney had been busy putting up a temporary shelter against the rain, for the kids—and now Jimmy was cooking dinner in a small hollow in the rock, which he had found a very short distance from the cave, whilst Thoney went to fetch more wood and look for a little dessert for the children.

They wanted to do all they could for them to-day.

Meyrick and Meta were delighted with the permission Nana had given them, and as the ground was much too damp to walk upon, they jumped from stone to stone, until they arrived at Jimmy's funny kitchen.

He told them that dinner was nearly ready, and

he was coming to lay it directly just outside the cave.

A few minutes later a picturesque group had gathered round Jimmy's ground dinner-table.

Meyrick and Meta sat in the door-way of the cave, Thoney, who had now come back, sat with Jimmy on stones outside, Nana, who had just fed Sydney and put him to sleep beside Francis, sat also on a stone. She wore a red-striped turban.

As the ground was damp from the rain, it was covered all round the dinner-table with waterproofs. Pedro was, as usual, beside Meta. It had been very difficult to keep this good watch-dog quiet when the soldiers paid their unexpected visit to the cavern.

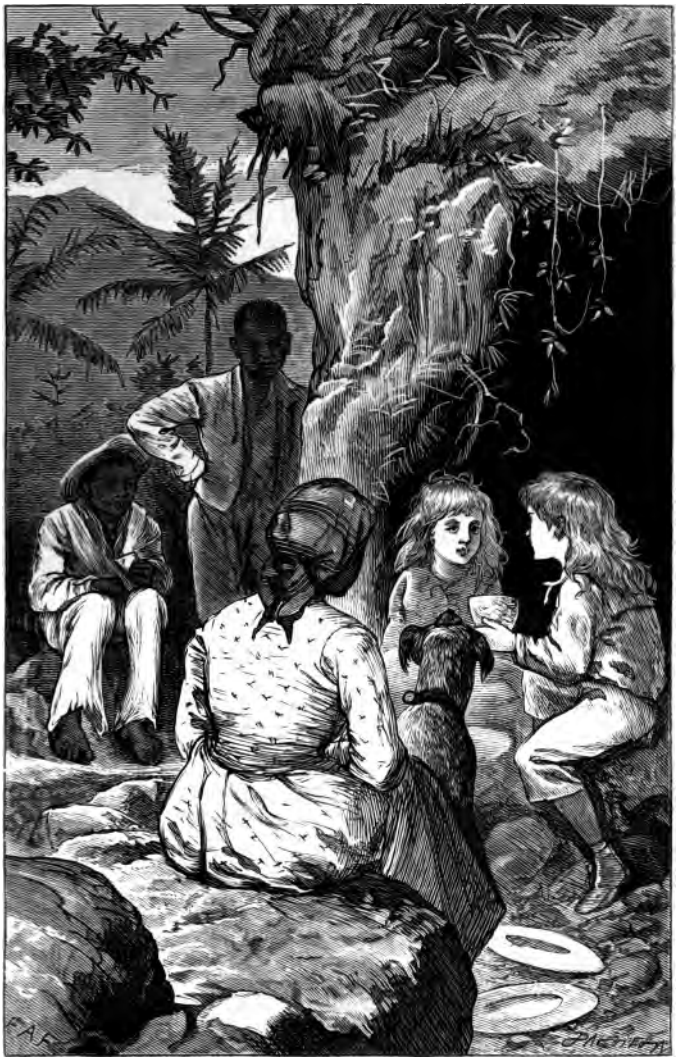
Meyrick and Meta were now very quiet so as not to awaken the twins, that Nana might get her dinner in peace.

There was a good dinner to-day, fowl and yam and bread, and Jimmy had cooked it very well.

But little Meta seemed to have no appetite, and left nearly all the fowl and yam which Nana had cut up so nicely for her, saying, as usual, that it would do for Pedro.

Thoney broke one of the two water-cocoa-nuts that he had climbed a tree to cut down for the children, and divided the water between Meta and Meyrick. The little girl liked this very much; she also liked some of the white cocoa-nut jelly itself that Thoney cut out for her to eat.

Later Jimmy gave her an orange which Thoney had also gathered and brought in. This she would not



"A few minutes later a picturesque group had gathered round Jimmy's ground dinner-table."—p. 84

eat either, and poor little Meta's face was very, very grave and sad all day long.

Once or twice that day she, like Meyrick, had cried very passionately, but with her, as a rule, sorrow did not have vent as it did with her brother, in wild outbursts of grief. Meta's sorrow was more lasting, more silent, more enduring, more unchildlike by far, if one might use this word to express it, than was Meyrick's.

The two children's characters were totally dissimilar. Meyrick was quick, impulsive, speaking out all that was in his heart and thoughts, sometimes naughtily, without weighing his words at all.

Meta was strangely quiet and reserved for a little child, and often had it grieved her fond mother that she could at times so little understand her own little girl.

Strangers never took to Meta as they did to Meyrick. One reason for this may have been that she did not show them love as readily as Meyrick showed it, nor did she seem to ask for, or want, their love, as it were in return.

When Meta had been disobedient she was not melted to tears because she was sorry she had disobeyed, as was Meyrick very easily, nor did she ever, of her own accord, own that she had been naughty, and ask to be forgiven.

She had a very determined little way and will of her own, young though she was.

Perhaps this was partly father's, partly Nana's fault. Since Amy had died, Meta was the only girl and therefore a great pet with father, who was rather

inclined to spoil her sometimes, and Nana had, I am afraid, very often given in to, and spoilt, the little girl when she should rather have punished her, and nothing is so bad for a wilful, or any dispositioned, child as to spoil him or her.

But there was much that was good in little Meta's character, if she would only let it come out oftener.

She was very loving, this she knew herself, although she could not show her love like Meyrick showed his, and in many ways she was most unselfish, often giving up little pleasures and treats herself, that her brother might enjoy them instead.

She had loved her parents very dearly, and felt, oh, so lonely, more lonely than any one could think, as she sat there at dinner on the day that her mother had followed her father so quickly to his grave, although Jimmy, Thoney, Nana and also Meyrick did all they could to comfort her.

After dinner Francis awoke much better for his sleep. Nana gave him his dinner and then asked Jimmy to mind him a little.

She had another baby to nurse. Sitting down, she took Meta on to her lap, and the poor little girl, who had had a very trying day of it, and had been up very early in the morning, was soon soothed off to sleep.

Poor Nana was very tired herself, and no wonder!

She could not help feeling very glad now whenever any of the children were asleep.

She loved both Sydney and Francis very dearly, as she would have loved any child of Mabel Cleveland's, but she had certainly wished several times

since they had had to take refuge in the bush that there had only been one baby instead of two.

Yet had Nana been asked which twin she could do without, Sydney or Francis, she would from her heart have said "neither," although between them they kept her engaged almost day and night.

"Never mind," the good woman said, as she resolved to do her best for all the children; but if matters did not mend soon, she wondered to what her best would amount!

CHAPTER XIV.

A RIDE.

"MAY I nurse one of the twins, Nana?" asked Meta, soon after she awoke from her sleep, to find her little brothers both at play with the orange she had refused, each wanting to hold it all the time.

"Hold him well," said Nana, as she put Syd on to his sister's lap.

"I should like to nurse him always, Nana," she said, as the little fellow began to laugh and clap his hands because Meta laughed with him.

"He wouldn't like it much, though," Meyrick put in. "He'd like a better nana than you, I should think."

"Don't I hold him well, Nana?"

"Quite good; but Meta, you no like to be Nana always."

"Isn't Syd just like father, Nana?" Meta then asked, "and what is that little thing just there," she continued, as Sydney tossing his head back showed the little black speck under his chin. "When I sat on father's lap I used to see him have it too."

"A black mole," answered Meyrick.

The mark was so small that it would never have

been noticed but for its strange position. "Francis hasn't got one."

"No, but that's the only difference, isn't it Nana," chimed in Meyrick. "Meta's a regular copy, and just said that about Syddy because mother said it once. They're both like father and like mother too and like us too, aren't they, Nana?"

Meyrick seemed jealous of the honour of each member of his family and wanted them all to be alike. "Which baby do you like best Nana?" Meta then said.

"The two the same," was the answer.

"So do I," said Meyrick, "because they are the same. Won't it be fun when they get big boys like me to see them both the same, and for people to have to look under Syd's chin to see which he is?"

"They might not be the same then," replied Meta. Both children seemed now to want to contradict one another, Meta was rather given to this habit. It was a very ugly one of the little girl's, but to-day Meyrick was equally contradictory.

Jimmy and Thoney then went out, Thoney to see to the kids, and Jimmy to wander a little way to the property belonging to his late master.

The latter soon came back carrying the largest pine-apple the children had ever seen.

"What a splendid pine," exclaimed Meyrick, "did you get that from my garden?"

Jimmy shook his head.

"From mine?" asked Meta.

"No, me pick it first pine-field me come to on property."

The children had each had a garden of their own at Woodlands, and anything grown in, and gathered from, their own gardens was always thought very good. Jimmy had not had to go near to Woodlands great house to gather that pine, for the property extended many miles round in several directions, and there was one pine-field not very far off from the cave, almost on a border of the property.

The pine-apple was cut and divided into five pieces. Jimmy had fetched it specially for Meta, and she said that Jimmy, Thoney, and Nana must all have some too, or she would not eat hers.

Syddy had shown himself dissatisfied at Meta's nursing long ere this, and was now on the floor amusing himself with a calabash.

The children generally drank out of calabashes now they lived in the bush. Jimmy had gathered them from trees and cut them into good drinking cups for them. Everything came in useful now. Half a cocoa-nut shell was Jimmy's mug.

The rain had fallen heavily, on and off, all day.

Towards evening it again held up for a very short time.

The air in the cave was very close and stifling, so Jimmy and Thoney offered to take Meyrick and Meta for just a very little turn riding on their shoulders.

This delighted both children; Meyrick rode Jimmy, Meta Thoney, and when at one time they felt a drop of rain, Meyrick spurred Jimmy, as he called it, with his heels, and then the man started off and ran all the way home to the cave, Thoney fol-

lowing at the same pace, the men thus giving the children, seated upon their shoulders, a splendid ride.

The little ones were then all put to bed, and thus ended another day, and thus began another night, inside the cave.

CHAPTER XV.

PEDRO WANTS JIMMY.

"PEDRO, Pedro," cried Meyrick, early next morning, as he looked in vain for the dog, who did not come as usual in answer to the summons of his little master.

"Jimmy, isn't it strange Pedro won't come, and I am saving this nice bit of plantain for him."

"Him got 'way somewhere," answered the man, "I no find him at all dis morning."

"Hark," then cried the little boy, "there's his bark, don't you hear it, perhaps he has been hunting a hog."

As Meyrick spoke Pedro bounded towards them, taking no further notice of the child than just to cast upon him a sort of pitying look. He would not even wait to eat his piece of plantain, though now-a-days he had none too much to eat, and catching hold of Jimmy by the trousers, a thing he had never done before, he tried to pull him along with him.

"What's he doing Jimmy?" Meyrick asked.

"I no can tell. It seem he want drag me long wid him."

"Then he *has* been hunting hogs," said Meyrick, "and he wants you to take your gun and shoot one, don't you think that's it?"

Jimmy had brought away with him, the night of the rebellion, his master's gun, unloaded, of course, thinking that it might be useful, concealing it very carefully in the hammock, but he had never till to-day dared to take it out with him.

"Hog gib us good dinner, an' Miss Meta like pork well," said Jimmy, "so a garn ya," and he called out to Thoney, who was nearer to the cave than he was, to go and bring the gun from thence and some shot too.

"Chut dog, quiet bit," said Jimmy to Pedro, who was one moment biting at his thin, white trousers, and the next jumping up at his coloured shirt, the only two garments he wore. "A garn, Mars' Meyrick," he said again, and with these words he started with the dog, leaving Thoney to run after him with the gun.

Pedro rushed on in front of Jimmy quite delighted.

"How stupid of Pedro it was, Thoney," said Meyrick, as he met that man coming out of the cave, "to make Jimmy go along without the gun. I never knew Pedro so stupid before. If he's found a whole batch of hogs, they're no good without a gun to shoot them."

But Pedro knew what he was about, and it was Jimmy, not his gun, whom he wanted in so great a hurry.

It was still very early morning, but Meyrick always liked to be up early.

He now ran into the cave to tell Meta how funny Pedro had been.

"Jimmy 'll be back to breakfast, you know, Nana," said Meyrick, "he wouldn't let Pedro keep him away from that, but I wish it was breakfast time now, I want to see Jimmy again so much to hear what they've done. I shouldn't wonder if he brings home a splendid hog, too good to cook here!"

"Time will pass quick, Mars' Meyrick," Nana answered, "if you help Thoney a little bit get breakfast ready,"

"That would be very nice, wouldn't it, Meta?" he said; "I'll lay the fire."

"And I'll light it," said the little girl.

"And burn your fingers," suggested her brother; "that would be a great deal of use, wouldn't it?"

"But look there, Meta," he went on, stooping down and pointing with his finger through the bush, "there's a fire right down over there, do you see, and it's got away too. I wonder if anybody laid it to cook breakfast, and then it got away from them."

"I think they must have," answered Meta, "but isn't it big?"

"It seems getting bigger and bigger; I don't think we'll have anything to do with the fire, shall we Meta? It might get away from us you know. We'll spread the leaves for the cloth, and drive away the ants, and get some wood for the fire. I don't think Thoney will be long now, because he's milked the goat and done all sorts of things before you were up."

As soon as Thoney came and made his fire for

breakfast and did his cooking at it, the children's attention was so much engrossed in watching him that they forgot all about the large fire which they had been watching, and Thoney and Nana were so busy that morning that they did not notice it at all until they were summoned to breakfast.

It was then very visible, becoming more so every moment; the heavens were gradually filling with smoke, flames could be seen ascending higher and higher, until the heavens themselves were at last quite red with fire.

"What fire it be, Thoney?" asked Nana.

"I no tell," he answered.

Both looked horror-stricken.

"Perhaps," said Meta," Jimmy will be able to tell us all about it when he comes, perhaps he's seen it better."

"I wonder Jimmy has not come back by now," Nana then said; "he gone very long. Thoney have breakfast quick and help give pick'ninnies some, then go see quick for Jimmy, but you no stay away long too."

All made haste over breakfast, and then Thoney was off in a very few minutes, but as he started in pursuit of Jimmy his face wore a very startled, terrified look; he had no dog to lead him, nor did any one tell him which way to take to find Jimmy, but instinctively he followed the direction of the fire.

It was more than a negro fire got away; it was not bush burning, this he could tell, and no doubt, Thoney said to himself, Jimmy had gone to look at the fire, and there he would find him.

But was this the man's only reason for running every step of the way instead of walking, and in order to reach the exact spot where the fire had broken out, taking all the shortest bush-cuts to Woodlands?

CHAPTER XVI.

A BABY LOST.

THE children took great interest in watching the fire, and Nana allowed them to remain outside the cave so long as they kept where the ground was pretty dry.

She was very busy herself washing in the stream, for she had no clean clothes at all left for the children to put on.

The twins soiled their things very quickly crawling over the dust floors, and Nana had brought very few clothes away with her into the bush.

To-day little Syd had on a very pretty little frock, one that his nurse had brought away with the other clothes quite by mistake. His mother had worked it for him, but that and the frock which Francis now wore were the only two that were clean.

Nana would not have put these little ones on any frocks to-day had she not expected the soldiers' return every moment, and she did not wish them to say, or think, that she "cared Buckra pick'ninnies any how."

Francis was very much better to-day. She had put the twins, with their bottles, each into a little

basket, in the doorway of the cave, where she could see them quite well from the stream in which she stood washing.

She had plenty to do this morning whilst the rain held up, for to keep an eye on Meyrick and Meta, to wash her clothes and, from time to time, dry her hands to attend to one or other of the twins was no easy matter.

Then Nana, like the children, could not for long together keep her eyes off the fire. Where was it, the burning of what place now reddened half the sky?

"No go where I no see you, Mars' Meyrick and Miss Meta," Nana once called out loudly, as the two children wandered a little beyond their bounds, and "no go too near bank either, or you slip down gulley." Nana meant slip down the hill. She did not use quite the right word.

"All right, Nana," shouted Meyrick in reply; "I'll keep Meta out of mischief."

Meyrick could talk very grandly, but he had not yet quite learnt to keep himself out of mischief.

Nana allowed the children to loiter about for another half-hour, when, on turning round to call them in to have a fowl bone if they liked for lunch, as dinner might be late to-day, she saw Meyrick running towards her alone.

He told Nana that Meta had just slipped a little way down and he couldn't pull her back again. She wasn't slipping more, but would Nana just come to help her up?

Nana glanced at the twins who were now asleep,

then hurried off with Meyrick. He led her just round a corner of the mountain, not two minutes' walk from the stream, but because it was round the corner out of sight of the cave.

"You bad pick'ninnies, Mars' Meyrick," said Nana, speaking more sternly than she had spoken to either of the children since they left Woodlands, "to go where I no see you."

Meyrick explained to Nana that Meta had not slipped down here but much nearer the stream, only as she couldn't get up again there, and he couldn't help her, she had gone along down there holding on to the bush to try to find a better place, but as it was a worse one Meyrick thought he had better call Nana to help. He had walked along at the top, and couldn't see any good place at all for Meta to come up again.

The little girl was clinging to the stump of a small tree crying silently. It was in trying to pick a rock-rose, of which she had caught sight, that she slipped too far to recover herself.

Nana soon helped Meta up, and then both she and Meyrick walked towards the cave, looking very much ashamed of themselves. Nana was very angry with them, because they had got their feet a little wet and Meta had soiled her frock.

Meyrick felt that he had not taken good care of Meta as he promised Nana that he would; he had certainly told his little sister she had better not pick the flower, but he was a generous-hearted little fellow and did not make this excuse for himself even to himself, and only thought that he was very

much to blame for allowing Meta to go so near the edge of the bank.

Nana hurried back to the twins. It was the first time they had been left quite alone for a moment, but she thought they must be all right, or she would have heard them cry.

But what was her horror when she returned to the cave and saw only one baby where she had left two; both baskets were there, but one was empty. Francis lay in his basket, half awake and half asleep with his bottle in his mouth, but his twin-brother Sydney's basket was empty, and both he and his bottle were gone out of it. Where was he, where, oh where was little Sydney, his father's namesake, the little one whom his mother had thought so like his father, and of whom she had said to Nana more than of all the rest "take care of him"?

But he could not be gone far, Nana thought, no one would want, no one could come and take a baby. Thoney or Jimmy must have returned some other way, and seeing Sydney perhaps waking up, must have lifted him out of his basket, and have carried him into the inner cave.

All this she thought in a moment and rushed in to look for him.

No, he was not there, one of the men must have taken him then to look for her, and have gone in a different direction to that which she had taken. Quickly she picked up Francis and ran here and there calling Jimmy, Thoney, by name.

But neither one nor the other man answered. Then loudly she called Sydney, as though that

baby could reply to his name and tell her where he was.

No doubt if he had heard his Nana's voice he *would* have answered her by a loud cry.

But no cry came either, and with the three remaining children, Nana carrying Francis, and Meyrick and Meta clinging to her dress, one on either side of her, the poor woman rushed about looking for the missing child in every possible direction, but quite in vain.

"Oh and father's namesake," Nana kept on saying, "one that poor mother say favoured father more than other, one that she tell me take such good care of, oh Syddy, Syddy!" she called out as frantically she rushed on, Meyrick and Meta crying as they quickly followed, finding it hard work to keep up with their Nana to-day. But the rain came down once more, and then she knew that if she wanted the three children who were now left to her to be well and live, she dare not keep them out in the rain, and after what had just happened she was equally sure that she dare not stay out alone and leave them in the cave without her. Indeed, both Meyrick and Meta themselves felt too frightened to unloose their tight hold of her dress for one moment, so she could not have left them to go and look for Sydney, even if she would have done so. She rushed back into that home of utter misery which the cave had become, and giving way to grief for the first time since so much of it had come upon her, she sat down on the ground and sobbed, with little Francis clasped in her arms, and Meyrick and Meta clinging to her, sobbing also.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SCENE OF THE FIRE.

WHEN Jimmy and Pedro first set out together in the early morning, the dog was untiring in his exertions to make the man walk as fast as he could, and it was soon quite evident that it was not hogs that Pedro was after.

Not very many minutes elapsed before Jimmy himself required no urging to make him walk his quickest.

What was that sight that met his view and made his very blood run cold?

What light yonder, shining through the trees, was that which he could now see reflected upon the very heavens themselves?

And why was Pedro guiding him to the spot from whence the flames seemed to issue?

A fire had got away somewhere, a terrible fire, and the nearer Jimmy approached Woodlands' great house, so much the nearer he approached also the very flames themselves.

Could it really be that his late master's residence was on fire?

Jimmy and Pedro soon reached Woodlands, Pedro howled piteously, Jimmy rung his hands and looked up imploringly to heaven, but neither man nor dog could tell what else to do.

The pretty, pretty bungalow was all in flames.

Mars' Cleveland's house was entirely of wood, and wooden houses do not take long to burn to the ground when once they are in flames.

If only he could save something, Jimmy thought, something for the pick'ninnies; their parents had such pretty things!

He could just catch sight of the drawing-room porch, the stable of Mars' Meyrick's toy pony, and there he could see the horse burning to ashes.

The pretty furniture of costly wood was burnt as quickly as logs would burn that Jimmy might collect for his fires, no respect had the flames for Mahoe, Peacock or Juniper.

A bright thought struck Jimmy.

The flames had not yet spread to the outside nursery, he might perhaps get round to it, and there was a box full of trinkets and other valuables belonging to the children's parents, which he and Thoney had carried thither to be out of the way, and in comparative safety, the day of the outbreak, some few hours before they left Woodlands.

Somehow or other he must reach the nursery, but unfortunately the wind was blowing that way, and the roof was scorched already.

Jimmy could not approach it from the front, so went through the coffee piece, round by the back. Pedro followed him.

When there, he knocked out the nearest window, through which he scrambled in.

Jimmy moved the box, and as though poor Pedro knew all that was taking place, he ran behind it, and there seeing Meta's favourite doll which, if you remember, she had put there for a punishment on the day of the outbreak, he caught it up in his mouth and leapt out of the window with it.

The box was very heavy, but Jimmy quickly hoisted it on to his head and made for the window. As Jimmy passed the nursery table he saw Nana's large work-basket lying on it. This would be very useful to her, so he caught it up also.

"Hi, dem poor pick'ninnies who played here so pretty," he said, heaving a heavy sigh, "what trouble come to dem, an dat pretty house too, all burnt down now. Hi, hi! wicked ting to do, great sin. Dem niggers bad!"

Jimmy managed to get the box and basket both safely out of the nursery window, but he found it very difficult to avoid, as he went back, the ever wider-spreading flames.

He had great difficulty to get round the burning bungalow now.

There was a pathway to the back of the nursery and kitchen, and beneath that extended a very deep bank.

The flames blew across the path. Jimmy crept a little way down the bank, bearing himself up as people of his race can so cleverly, by clinging, with his unshod feet, to the uneven pieces of ground.

He had to go very leisurely, and guardedly, for the box was on his head.

Pedro was now on in front leading, as it were, the way.

Jimmy rounded the house in the distance, put the box and Nana's basket in a place of safety, and then tried once more to reach the same room, in order to rescue out of it another box that was there, one belonging to Nana, in which Jimmy knew she had stowed away many clothes belonging to the children.

Pedro, after watching Jimmy, dug a hole with his paw in the ground near to the place where the man had placed the rescued box, and there buried the treasure he had found and saved for Meta.

His little mistress and favourite would have liked to see the anxiety which he felt for the welfare of her pet doll.

Jimmy was wondering if Nana and Thoney had seen the flames, when Thoney appeared upon the scene.

He looked horror-stricken ; what a terrible sight ! But Jimmy *was* glad to welcome Thoney.

It had been very dreadful for him to stand there, so helplessly all alone, and have to see Woodlands burn to ashes !

No spectators crowding to the scene looked very suspicious !

Rebels, angry because they could not now take possession of the house and property, must have set the house on fire, and now no doubt everybody stayed away for fear of the crime being brought home to them.

When Thoney arrived the bungalow was almost one heap of ashes from end to end.

Not one corner had escaped the general conflagration.

Jimmy and Thoney now tried together to save Nana's box, but as they crawled in through the window, which Jimmy had broken out, the flames spread in a moment, the opposite wall caught fire, and this obliged them to give up the attempt as useless.

They were very sorry not to save the box, but Jimmy was truly glad to have been in time to rescue the one he had already carried out.

"Bad ting, bad wicked ting;" said Thoney, reiterating Jimmy's words, spoken when *he* had first seen the dreadful fire; but all the mourning of these good, brave men did not enable them to do one thing towards putting out a fire that they knew was causing such terrible loss and damage.

"If rain only come," Jimmy had said once or twice, "but den him come too late!" And Jimmy was right. When soon a very heavy shower came down, it was only in time to put out the smoke of the ashes.

Even the nursery was now burnt to atoms. Jimmy and Thoney would have liked very much to catch some stock that had now scattered itself here and there, and take it back with them, but this would raise suspicion, and no doubt the soldiers would be back to-day and arrange something for the children's welfare.

Jimmy caught sight of Mars' Meyrick's little pony, looking very much like his name, which was "Frisky," because he had had no work to do for so many

days, and then the man heaved a deep-drawn sigh because of the changes that had come upon these children within a week!

Jimmy and Thoney knew that Nana would be wanting them back, and also that they ran great risks in staying near to the fire, for the constables (police) would no doubt soon be up, and seeing them, and no one else upon the spot, would fancy they were the incendiaries, or people who had maliciously set the house on fire, and then take them up in consequence, so catching a few more fowls, gathering a ripe bread-fruit and a bunch of plantains and bananas, they started to return to the cave.

Jimmy carried the box and Thoney the fowls, work-basket, and other things, with the gun that Jimmy had taken with him in the morning, as Jimmy was both taller and stronger than Thoney, and the box was heavy.

Pedro unearthed his doll, so wet and dirty that its little owner, one would think, would hardly be able to recognize it when she saw it, and triumphantly bore it after the two men.

They arrived at last, faint, weary, heart-broken, to hear with increased sorrow what had transpired during their absence; what new calamity had befallen the little Clevelands and themselves.

The police were at Woodlands in less than ten minutes after the men had left it, but finding nobody on the spot, and seeing that the fire was quite extinguished, they did not remain there very long, but returned to the station there to report what had happened to Woodlands' great house!

CHAPTER XVIII.

PEDRO AND THE DOLL JESSIE.

NOTHING could exceed the grief and astonishment which Jimmy and Thoney felt when, having in a few words told Nana how Woodlands was burnt, they learnt that little Mars' Sydney was lost.

They seemed to go from one sorrow straight into another as it were, and in comparison with this last calamity that had befallen them, even the burning down of Woodlands seemed small.

The men listened to Nana's tale from beginning to end, they looked at the empty basket but no better than she had been able to imagine what could have come to Sydney, could they guess what had befallen the poor little baby.

Robbing him, and carrying him away, must have been, they felt sure, the work of the Rebellionists, and then into what blood-thirsty hands had the poor little fellow fallen! And what would the rebels now do to him?

Jimmy could not imagine what their possible motive could have been for stealing him.

The men lost little time in questioning, wondering or foreboding.

They set out at once with Pedro as their guide, to hunt for the missing child, but though they walked fast and far, though they searched high and low, going here and there in all directions, their search ended in failure.

Meyrick and Meta shared in the general sorrow. Little Syddy, their dear little brother, was lost, little Syd who had been so good when he let Meta nurse him yesterday, and it seemed to be half their fault too!

If Meyrick had only taken care of Meta, and had not let her slip down the "gulley," he thought, he need not have called Nana so far away from the twins, and then this could not have happened.

What was father, what was mother thinking of him now? he wondered, as he generously accused himself, not Meta at all.

But Jimmy told him later not to think it was all his fault, for when these wicked people made up their minds to a thing, they managed to do it somehow or other, and they would perhaps have found another opportunity if that one had not occurred.

But poor little Meyrick was only half comforted and assured.

He felt he had *not* obeyed father or mother, who had both said last to him, "Take care of Meta," and this was very dreadful.

And poor Nana also remembered to her sorrow that she had wished but this morning that there was only one baby instead of two to cause such trouble and anxiety. How eagerly she wished now the wish unwished, how she longed to have both babies again to love and care for!

When Jimmy, Thoney, and Pedro returned, although it was dark and all the children were tired, only little Francis had gone to bed.

Meyrick and Meta had begged very hard to be allowed to sit up, and Nana had gladly, on her own account as well as to please them, granted the permission, for she felt very miserable and nervous to-night.

Pedro must have been very glad when he went up to his little mistress and licked her hand, to see the doll in her arms, not wet and dirty as he had brought it home to her, but with much of the dirt rubbed off and quite dry.

When on his return from the fire the children had seen Pedro coming towards them, they had wondered what strange thing he carried in his mouth, and when he went straight up to Meta, and dropped Jessie on to her lap, she could hardly recognize at first the doll on whom she had put a clean frock the last day that she had played with her, in the dirty-looking, wet and tumbled thing that Pedro had been carrying and now gave to her.

But one look at Jessie's much-loved, often-kissed, china face was enough to cause her to be recognized.

Meta was truly glad to have her favourite doll again, and when Jimmy hurriedly told the little girl that Pedro had found her behind a box in the nursery and had, of his own accord, brought her all the way home to his little mistress, the child threw her arms round the dog's neck, and kissed him for very gratitude.

"What a good thing it was, Nana," said Meta, when she remembered how the doll came to be behind the box in the nursery, "that Jessie was naughty that day and had to be put in the corner in the nursery for a punishment, wasn't it?"

Meyrick looked disappointed that Pedro had brought him nothing, but Nana promised to find him something very pretty in the box when they opened it.

When the three searchers for Sydney now came back into the cave, the two men shook their heads very sadly, as Nana had quite expected them to do, and the dog walked first up to Meyrick, who patted him, then to Meta, then to Francis asleep, and then sniffed the spot where the other twin had slept last night. Having done this he lay down beside Nana in a listening attitude, but he was very wet, for it was still pouring with rain, so Nana could not allow him to stay too near the children, and gave him his supper, which she at once prepared, in a far-off corner of the cave, where she put him a soiled wrap, on which he knew he was to sleep. Here he shook a great deal of the wet from off him.

The men then made a little fire just within the cave, of fire-sticks which Thoney had brought in and laid there early in the morning, and all now eat some supper of plantain, for the children and everybody had fared very ill to-day.

It pleased Meyrick and Meta to see a fire lighted inside the cave.

But whilst Jimmy lighted the fire, Thoney had to go out and see after the goat.

They were obliged to keep her tethered here in the bush, for fear of her wandering back towards Woodlands, or too far away for them to find her when she was required, also because, now in the wet season, the kids must be under the shed that Thoney had knocked up for them.

Thoney had cut plenty of grass for the goat in the early morning before breakfast, and some she and the kids could reach and pick for themselves, but he knew that they would want more for the night, when the kids slept away from their mother, so while Jimmy was preparing supper with Nana, he went out to cut it for them.

Then there were the two fowls to be attended to. These had been put, when the men brought them, in a basket in a corner of the cave, and the children had thrown them in little pieces of banana, and Nana had given them a little water, but it would be uncomfortable for them to remain here all night, so Thoney, in a few moments, knocked up a perch within the darkest part of the cave, and put them to roost upon it, after first taking the precaution to cut their wings. As it was now late, they would not leave the roost again that night, and in the very early morning, he would first feed and then kill them. This would be the safest and best plan. Jimmy was sorry that they could not kill the fowls over-night, but had they done this they would probably have spoilt by the time they were required. One way and another there was much to think about and arrange this evening, but Jimmy and Thoney were good managers and always eager to do something or

other for the good and benefit of the little Clevelands.

The children went to their beds directly after supper, but long into the night did Jimmy, Thoney and Nana sit up and talk of what had been, what was, and what was to be.

The future was full of dread. If the soldiers passed to-morrow, which was more than likely, how would they act?

They had counted the children, and written down their names, what would they think when they found one unaccountably gone?

They would treat Nana and Jimmy with grave suspicion, and no doubt, at once, remove the three other children from their care, and what then would Mars' Meyrick, what Miss Meta do, and poor little Mars' Francis in a strange home, quite amongst strange people, selected by the soldiers, or by those to whom the soldiers reported them?

This should not happen if the servants could prevent it, which they would try their best to do. They settled to remove the little orphan children to-morrow before day-clean to Jimmy's house, a negro hut, four miles from the main road, and five miles and a half from the cave.

As long as these three could, and might do so, they would watch over the children, work for them, want for them if need be, feed them and give them the very best of all they had.

All should find room there, for Thoney could sleep at Jimmy's house when he liked and at his own when he preferred to do this.

Thoney's was a very small hut on Woodlands' property about three miles and a half from Jimmy's home.

Mars' Cleveland had, a year ago, allowed Thoney to build that little home of his on Woodlands' property, with Woodlands' wood, and Thoney had been very grateful for this kind permission, and from time to time he had worked his own ground so successfully that it was now worth something to him.

CHAPTER XIX.

LETITIA SURPRISED BY THE BAND OF MEN.

WHILST Pedro had been busily engaged at Woodlands, rescuing Meta's doll, and Nana was helping the little girl up the bank, down which she had slipped, taking advantage of everybody's absence, stealthy footsteps were approaching the cave.

A girl, bare-footed, with her blue skirt gathered up beneath her waist, and hanging to her knees, her green jacket fitting closely to her well-shaped figure, her parti-coloured turban tied gracefully round her head, on which she carried a basket, stole through the bush to the cave, in which it was already known to the rebel negroes that the Buckra pick'ninnies of Mars' Cleveland were hidden by faithful negro servants.

The rebels would allow no one to be faithful and go unpunished if they could have their way, and a bitter feeling of hatred, envy and revenge towards Jimmy and Nana, whose side was now victorious, had arisen in many hearts.

Perhaps no passion rages more fiercely in the Jamaica black man's heart than this deadly sin of envy, nor kindles in him the desire to commit such unmanly, treacherous actions as does this hateful

vice, which taking at times possession of his very soul lures him on to great depths of wickedness.

It was envy against Jimmy Grant that made the rebels resolve first to set Woodlands on fire, and then to steal and murder one of the children under his protection.

This girl was not acting for herself but for another.

Her father, Robert Crosdale, had intended to be the possessor of Woodlands, had everything turned out favourably for the rebels as they believed it would when the rebellion broke out, and acting on his instructions she was now about to steal a child, for the soldiers had passed up and would very soon be passing back again, and he wished to have some proof to put before them of Jimmy's and Nana's unworthiness to be trusted one moment longer with the children, and what proof could be better but that a child had been killed by them?

Some time to-day they resolved to steal and kill the child, if possible.

The soldiers would, in all probability, be returning to-morrow, or next day, and then one of the rebels would have it in her possession and show it to them. Crosdale thought this was a splendid plan, but he forgot that a higher power could frustrate it.

Crosdale did not know, did not trouble himself to think that the twin-brothers were in God's hands, committed to His loving, fatherly care more than nine months ago in baptism, and again and again in the prayers of trusting, God-fearing parents during the few months in which their baby lives had been watched over by them both!

The girl Letitia had been waiting in ambush some time before she took the little child.

She had heard on her way in the early morning Pedro's bark in the distance; she had later caught sight of him with Jimmy a good mile off; she had seen Thoney start to follow them; and she guessed that they had all gone to Woodlands, which she knew her father was burning; she saw Nana washing in the river, and Meyrick and Meta playing about.

She came so near to the mouth of the cave that she could see the twins asleep. She waited long in the hopes that Nana would move away for one moment, but she seemed to wait in vain, until she saw Meyrick at last come towards Nana, heard what he said to her, and then watched the two go away together. The nurse had turned round the corner. This was her time. The girl stood in front of the twin brothers, one moved restlessly in his sleep, the other slept soundly, this should be her choice. Sydney, his father's namesake, his mother's special darling, was the one who slept soundly, and carefully lifting the unconscious baby, so as not to awaken him, and folding him in a shawl she carried in her basket, she bore him quickly away. She caught sight of his bottle and took that also, but she did not notice that it was almost empty.

She had advanced from the back, and this was also her shortest way home again.

Besides which, by going this way Nana, should she return to the cave immediately, could not see her so long as she kept well behind the trees, and should she attempt to follow she would, in all probability,

as proved to be the case, take first the opposite direction to seek the child.

The bush shielded her almost entirely.

It was well, she thought, that she had brought a shawl with her, for although the pretty frock the little English child wore might be very useful to her to sell by and by, if seen by anybody now on the road it would attract attention.

The baby slept soundly for some time, but when, at length, Letitia, wrongly imagining that she heard footsteps behind, quickened her pace, he awoke, and finding himself in strange arms, he cried pitifully.

She offered him his bottle, but he would not take it. He evidently did not like the hand that put it to his mouth, so only cried louder and louder, refusing to be comforted.

Then came the shower that had stopped Nana's search and extinguished the burning ashes of Woodlands.

Closer and closer she wrapped the shawl round little Syd, more and more she tried to hush him to sleep, and at last, from very weeping, the poor little fellow fell asleep again in spite of his efforts to cry on and keep awake.

On and on they journeyed, the girl carrying the child she had stolen, the little stolen child seeming to grow heavier in her arms every moment.

Now up one hill they went, now down another, to the right, to the left, round bye-paths, scrambling through bush, as only a native of the country could scramble through it. Thus they went on quietly until they were within a mile of Robert Crosdale's

hut, but then Sydney awoke in real earnest and it became impossible to pacify him.

He was very hungry. Letitia offered him his bottle, and for very hunger the little fellow took the few drops that were in it, but these could not satisfy him, and he cried louder and louder than before.

The cry of hunger in a baby of ten months old is very loud, and Sydney had never felt hunger before.

The girl Letitia had a little milk in a bottle in her basket. This she emptied into his own bottle, but it had gone sour, and so Sydney would not touch it, and only pushed the bottle angrily away with his little hand each time it was offered to him.

The rain, too, was now wetting the child's poor little face, for he would not allow Letitia to keep it covered with her shawl.

She could not stop to pick a plantain leaf to serve as umbrella, and had she done so, she could not have carried it, for to hold the struggling Sydney required both her hands; her basket she still balanced on her head.

Fainter and fainter grew the poor child's cries; it was a very exhausted cry at last, as the girl who bore him now along the high road went quicker and quicker, but it was not too exhausted a cry to reach the ears of a band of men on the hill-top above the road.

They had heard this cry for some time, although they had neither seen Letitia nor had she seen them, owing to a bend round the hill that had hidden each from the other's sight.

Letitia sat down for a moment to rest to see if, by so doing, she could in any way quiet the child, but

nothing comforted him. He wanted his Nana to come and give him food to satisfy his hunger, but no Nana came in answer to this long cry, although it had always been her wont to answer his slightest call to her.

Letitia started up to continue her journey, she covered the little face with her shawl by force, she pressed the baby closer to her side, when, the next moment, she encountered ten men!

They had, from their eminence, at last caught sight of Letitia, who still had neither seen nor heard them, and as there was no path-way down the hill, they had descended it through the bush, one after another, passing from clump to clump, till they stood in the path-way before her.

She hoped still that they would not address her, but her wish was not granted.

They knew her to be Letitia, the daughter of Crosdale, a great rebel leader, and they therefore eyed her with suspicion.

"Whose pick'ninny dat?" asked the captain of the band.

"Me sister's," was the answer, but instead of trying to comfort the weeping child as they, rough men though they looked, would have tried to do, she held him in a yet tighter embrace.

"Show him," he said, and the men all clustered round Letitia.

"What for?" she asked.

"Because me choose," said the commander, and as he spoke, some of the men held her arms, whilst he lifted the baby out of them.

It was as they had thought. A poor little white infant in the hands of the daughter of one of the very cruellest of the rebels, and they had come just in time to save it.

"Since when nigger like you have white pick'ninnies?" they asked, but Letitia made no answer.

The men who stood before Letitia were black, but of a very superior caste of countenance to herself. They were armed with cutlasses and a very odd kind of musket, their own dress was hidden by creepers and branches of shrubs, which they had entwined round their bodies, evidently for the purpose of being mistaken for the bushes through which they moved.

Their feet were bare, their countenances, at this moment, very stern.

The girl recognized them only too well.

They were Maroons, at friendship with the white race, and now on the search for Paul Bogle, the leader of the rebellion.

CHAPTER XX.

JIMMY'S HOUSE.

THE next morning the rain fell in torrents, heavy, pelting rain such as only falls in the tropics, swelling the rivers, carrying away with its force the very soil itself, and causing huge stones to fall over the mountain sides.

And Jimmy and Nana had quite decided to take the children from the cave this morning, and were up and about some time before daylight. Indeed they had had but little rest all night, thinking of the poor lost baby and of the three remaining children whom they loved so fondly. If they stayed here, they thought, they would be no nearer to finding Syddy than if they were at Jimmy's home. Here they had searched everywhere; Jimmy's home might even be nearer to the spot to which he had been carried, if the poor little fellow were still alive.

Jimmy and Nana knew that if Mars' Meyrick and Miss Meta were now torn from them, the poor children, after losing father, mother, and little Syd, would almost break their hearts, so this, at all hazards, they felt they must prevent.

A very early, small, hasty first tea was taken, and before the sun began to rise the bundles of wraps and clothes were made up, and in spite of rain the party started.

The cave was left; Jimmy knew that it would be of no use to wait for the rain to cease now that the seasons had regularly set in, and the children could not be taken too soon from the cave in which so much sorrow and trouble had come upon them.

Still Jimmy and Nana knew that a wetting might prove fatal to European children, so they wrapped the children very carefully in waterproofs and carried them all the way.

Nana had only one baby this journey; alas, how fondly she wished that she had two!

Jimmy carried Meyrick, and led along the goat, whilst Thoney carried Meta, and balanced a small bundle on his head.

The other things were left in the cave to be fetched later by Jimmy and Thoney.

It was fortunate that the heavy rain kept almost everybody in doors this early morning, or the party would, most likely, have met people on the road.

Jimmy gathered some plantain leaves, and he, Thoney and Nana all held one over the children to keep the rain off them. These leaves which were long, and about two feet wide, were so waterproof that the rain did not penetrate them. Meyrick laughed at the funny umbrellas as they went along. The cord with which Jimmy led the goat was fastened round his waist.

Pedro got very wet, as he followed to Jimmy's

house, his coat being very long. They all made as much haste as possible, for their own sakes as well as the little ones, and after a two hours' march they reached their destination.

Poor Nana, although she had worn a waterproof, was very wet, and when she arrived had no dry clothes to put on, but little Francis she had managed to keep quite dry.

Meyrick and Meta also had hardly got wet at all. Once or twice on the road Jimmy had stopped to gather some mint that grew by the water-side. With this they would make tea, to give the children to drink to prevent their taking cold.

On first arriving at Jimmy's abode a wood fire was lighted within the hut in order to air it, to dry the damp clothes, and to boil some tea, for although the children's clothes could not really get wet through the waterproofs that were wrapped all round them, Nana thought that they were a little damp, and therefore had them off for a few minutes to be held to the fire.

She was so fearful lest they should have fever. Then they drank their tea and ate a plantain which Thoney had brought with him from the cave, in his pocket, for them.

According to negro custom little Francis drank mint tea with the rest, and it kept him from having a return of fever.

Nana and the two men also had some tea. The goat and kids were put for the present under a very bushy tree. Then the only blanket which Jimmy possessed was aired and laid down upon the floor. The three children were put together to lie upon it, and,

as is usual after taking this soothing beverage, they quickly fell asleep.

Then Nana sat near the fire to dry her own wet clothes, whilst Jimmy and Thoney started off again to return to the cave to fetch from thence all that had been left behind. All the things in the bundle which Thoney had brought were so wet that they must be well aired before they could be used.

Jimmy's "Little House" on the banks of the Wild Cane River was a very good type of a Jamaica black man's dwelling-place. It was really only a hut, or very small mud cottage, but neither Jimmy nor any of his comrades would have applied the term hut or cottage to their homes; they were "little houses" in contra-distinction to the great or estates houses on the various properties.

Jimmy's house was made of plaster and mud, the wattled walls were pieces of wood crossing one another, filled in with mud and plaster, the floor was of mud, and the roof was thatched with grass.

A wattled partition in the centre, extending to within a yard of the roof, divided the hut into two equal parts, and there was a small kitchen outside.

It was called a kitchen because it was built on purpose for cooking to be done within it, but it contained neither stove, nor hearth, nor chimney. The smoke found its way out as best it could.

The walls were bamboos twisted up to the arched wooden roof, covered over with straw, the floor was of mud, and the roof was thatched with grass. Stones placed in a square, to support wood sticks in the centre, comprised the fire.

This was Jimmy's home, where he had lived some time before his late master had come to Jamaica, and here, although he was really an indoor-servant at Woodlands, he had considered he still lived, as every Friday or Saturday, sometimes on both days, he had worked on his own ground that surrounded his house, and then on Friday nights had slept in his own little house.

The name of Jimmy's house was the "The Retreat." It stood in a very quiet, secluded spot, with no house nearer to it than the African boy Thoney's. Nana's home was not really in Jamaica. She was born in Barbados, from which island she had been brought as a very young girl to Jamaica by a former mistress. This lady going to England a month before Mrs. Cleveland arrived in Jamaica, Nana was received into her employ the very day after she reached the island, and had lived with her ever since. She had a few relations in Jamaica, but they lived at Port Antonio, in Portland, which was a long way off.

Jimmy and Nana had settled last night how Jimmy's house was to be appropriated by the family.

One half of the cottage was to serve as sitting-room, the other half as bedroom for herself and the children. The two men would sleep together in the kitchen, when Thoney remained at "The Retreat" all night. The three would work for, and support the pick'ninnies, Nana would mind them, cook and work for them, and Jimmy and Thoney would hoe and dig for their support.

This was the arrangement they had made, and with hearty goodwill were they minded to carry it out.

There was but a scanty supply of furniture in the little house, but this must suffice for the present, two small wooden tables, one of which stood against the sitting-room wall, the other in the centre of the room, a small bench, three wooden chairs, two good-sized fibre mats, and a bedstead on which was a straw mattress, and to which belonged a blanket and two sheets.

It had seemed a very comfortable house for Jimmy alone, but now that Buckra pick'ninnies had come to live in it, he wished it had been much more so. Then Jimmy had one or two pots, pans and sauce-pans, a few plates, mugs, glasses, knives and forks and spoons, but no kettle, for a kettle is an article of use never seen in a black man or woman's dwelling in Jamaica.

Some of these things had been presents from young Missis. How Jimmy valued them now!

Jimmy could read a little, young Mar'sa had taught him to do so, and lying on the side-table, in front of mugs and glasses, was a reading book, also a Bible in large print, the last and best gift of the master who had taught Jimmy even something better than to be able to read.

Most natives of Jamaica make large professions of being Christians and have their little babies baptized, but many know very little about their Saviour, and lead any kind of lives they choose.

Jimmy thought he was a Christian when his master first spoke to him on the subject of religion, but he soon found out how very far off he really was from being one, and under his instruction he had learnt to

become a Christian. Jimmy had debated in his mind whether to leave his Bible at Woodlands or to bring it to "The Retreat," but he decided upon the latter plan, as he could always borrow a Bible at Woodlands, and he liked to have his here to try to read a few verses on Friday nights.

It was well that he had so decided, or his Bible would have been burnt with the rest of the things at Woodlands.

Nana had plenty of time to think as she sat by the wood fire drying her clothes.

This was indeed a great step for her and Jimmy to have taken, to bring English children to a negro house to live, but they had acted for the best, and as she glanced at the three slumbering little ones, and watched the pelting rain, a feeling of security stole over her, that for this night at least they were so far safely housed once again.

But where was the fourth? Poor little Syd! What could have become of him?

A dozen times in less than five minutes Nana asked herself this question, but could find no answer to it.

His disappearance was more strange than anything of which she had ever heard, but somehow she believed she would see him again!

It seemed as if he could not be gone for ever; anyhow, it should not be her fault if she did not find him, supposing he still lived.

This the true-hearted woman now said to herself, and vowed before God that should it be in anyway possible for her to find little Syd she would do so.

She would leave no stone unturned to discover what had befallen him, but she could lay no plans as to how she should set about her search. What she should do first or last was as difficult a question for her to answer as it had been for Meyrick to determine how he should take care of Meta, but, with the little boy, she believed that a way would come.

As soon as Nana's clothes were somewhat dry she began to dust Jimmy's little home, and put it as straight and comfortable as she could, that it might be as fit an abode for little English children as she was able to make it.

CHAPTER XXI.

MEYRICK'S ILL-HUMOUR.

IT seemed a long time, both to the men who were walking through torrents of rain to the cave and back, and to Nana who was anxiously awaiting their return to "The Retreat," before they really arrived there again with all their goods and chattels.

They had taken back the waterproofs to wrap round the bundles, which, considering all things, they had kept tolerably dry.

Pedro had gone back with the men. Nana was glad to get rid of the dog until they could see to him, as his coat was so wringing wet that she was afraid he would give the children cold.

It was certainly very good of Jimmy and Thoney so often to carry bundles, for, like all black men, they neither liked, nor were they accustomed, to do so.

Carrying bundles and loads is, strange to say, in Jamaica the work of black women, seldom or never of the men.

The children had awakened, and little Francis was sitting upon the blanket whilst Meta was amusing him. She was very fond of her baby brothers, and

her sad little face seemed to lose much of its sadness as she played with Francis.

Had she been thinking of her father or mother or Syd, her little lost baby-brother, or of them all together, whilst she had looked so very sad? She had not said, but poor little Meyrick and Meta had certainly quite enough to make them both very unhappy.

Meyrick was standing as near to the half-open doorway as the rain permitted, and the bad weather out of doors seemed to be influencing his temper, for he spoke very discontentedly to-day.

"It's so dark, Nana," he said, "why arn't there any windows here? How can I see with the shutters shut?"

Jimmy's house had no windows, nothing but wooden shutters, that could not be opened when it rained heavily.

"Jimmy has no money for windows, Mars' Meyrick," she answered.

"And when I look out there's nothing but fog, Nana; I can't see a thing," he went on.

"Some days fog same in seasons at Woodlands, Mars' Meyrick," answered Nana.

"But I don't like here," then said the little boy; "it's horrid, Nana, why did you and Jimmy bring us here? and I'm so hungry," Meyrick continued, speaking to, and looking very angrily at, his good nurse. "And there isn't a thing to do here, at home I'd toys to play with when the rain was down, and we'd father and mother there, hadn't we, Meta?" he asked as he walked towards his sister.

This was more like one of Meta's moods that Meyrick had put on to-day than one of his own, for Meyrick was not wont to be ill-tempered, or thoughtless, and the little girl, strange to say, was particularly amiable to-day.

She was half-crying as she said, as it were, through her tears,—

"Nana can't help it, I *don't* think, Meyrick."

Poor Nana felt very down-hearted.

Perhaps, she thought, after all they had done wrongly in bringing the pick'ninnies here. They should, perhaps, have left them in the cave until the soldiers came to take them to a proper home for Buckra children to live in—to send them to England where rich friends would care for them properly.

"I want something to eat, Nana," Meyrick continued, speaking in the same tone of voice, "you know, I suppose, that we haven't had a proper breakfast yet."

"Jimmy will soon fetch some here," said Nana; "he's gone long time now, but Jimmy will be very sorry he carry you to his home, Mars' Meyrick, now you not like it at all."

"It's so ugly and dark and horrid, and the floor's only mud. Oh Nana, we want father and mother and Woodlands so much, how can we like this?" said the little boy, and then his ill-humour found vent in tears.

A few minutes later Pedro, still more wet and dirty, arrived at the door of the hut. The men were just behind him.

Jimmy and Thoney were obliged to change their

clothes in the kitchen before they could possibly come in, for they were soaked through and through, and here Pedro had to shake off some of his moisture. Then a blazing fire was made just inside the little sitting-room, whilst Nana at once plucked the feathers from one of the fowls that the men had now brought with them. She cut it in two and broiled it, thinking this the quickest way to cook it.

There was not much vegetable for breakfast to-day, but as Jimmy grew yams on his ground, he hoped to have plenty of this vegetable to-morrow, and all were grateful for the food that to-day brought forth.

Jimmy's table was soon laid out with knives and forks and spoons, he had no table-cloth, but the want of this affected no one's appetite.

The two elder children, sitting on wooden chairs, seemed thoroughly to enjoy their breakfast, for late as it was, Meyrick said that it was breakfast, and so of course it was, only it would have to count for dinner as well. Francis sat in a basket on the floor picking a bone. He had just had a very little nice fowl gravy.

Meyrick and Meta were both really very hungry, and did not mind how roughly their breakfast was served up to them, for it was beautifully cooked.

Thoney fetched them water to drink from a stream not far off that Meyrick said was as cool as it could be.

When the breakfast was cleared away and the ashes from the fire were thrown out of the little house, Nana had the second fowl put on a fire in the kitchen to stew for soup.

Then she undid the bundles. No wonder Jimmy and Thoney had been so long coming back, for they had brought with them, as well as the other things, the little box of father's and mother's treasures.

There too was Jessie, Meta's doll, in the midst of the clothes.

The wraps would be as useful here as they had been in the bush, Jimmy and Thoney would want some of them to make up their bed at night, but how terribly scanty was the collection of children's clothes, considering that all their others had been burnt at Woodlands, and that there was no Mars' Cleveland to give money to buy more.

Little Francis was very good to-day, and allowed Meta to amuse him whilst everybody else was busy. Meyrick's work consisted in looking on whilst Jimmy, Thoney and Nana arranged and re-arranged the house.

The kitchen was long enough to let a man of Jimmy's height lie full length in it, and it was wide enough for four men to lie abreast.

The wind had changed, and as it did not now beat the rain against the house, Meyrick could stand at the door and watch the kitchen. A log of wood lay in it. This Jimmy told little Mars'a was for a seat.

For the rest of the day the rain came down incessantly, without holding up for one moment, and as the children were weary of having nothing to do, they went early to bed.

Meyrick took up Jimmy's reading book once or twice, but he said he knew it so well that he did not care much about reading that.

Just before the children went to bed, everything now looking very neat, Jimmy took his seat on the wooden bench beside the centre table.

Nana was seated on a chair nursing Francis, Meta was close to her with her little fair head nestling in her lap.

Meyrick climbed on to Jimmy's knee.

"I'm very sorry you know, Jimmy," he said.

"Sorry for why, Mars' Meyrick?"

"Don't you know, Jimmy? For saying I didn't like here, and for calling it horrid, and dark, and ugly, and all that."

"Jimmy no know Mars' Meyrick say it," answered the man, "but Jimmy's house all dat fe true."

"It isn't nice, Jimmy, like Woodlands was, and father and mother arn't here, but it's the best you've got, you know, so you couldn't give us a better home could you than the best you've got? and it's better now."

The little fellow felt that he had been very unkind to Jimmy, who, he knew, had done so very much for him, and somehow or other he wanted to make it all right with Jimmy before he went to bed. It did not matter to him whether he had said the unkind, ungrateful words to Jimmy himself or not, they were unkind, and unkind too towards one who was always good to him; and the little boy was so truly penitent that he could not have gone to bed until he had had it all out with the man whom he felt he had offended, and had told him he was sorry.

He had made it all up with Nana before.

How often, like Meyrick, do thoughtless little ones

offend, and act ungratefully, unlovingly towards those who are only, and ever, bent on doing them good, and how often do they, unlike Meyrick, forget the wound which they have caused, and go to bed without taking any steps to heal it—"to make it all right with Jimmy."

"Me try make house better soon for Mars' Meyrick an' Miss Meta," said Jimmy, "me do all me can."

"And I won't say it's dark and ugly any more, Jimmy," answered the child, "but I hope it won't be so dark and ugly to-morrow, do you think it will?"

"Jimmy no can tell," was the reply, "when rain hold up, him more light."

When Meyrick said his prayers that first night at "The Retreat," he asked God to give Jimmy good things for having been so good to all of them, he prayed Him to take care of everybody, to bless them and make them good, "Pray God bring Syddy back, and don't let Francis go away too," he added, "and thank You for not letting the soldiers take us away. Don't let me be angry to-morrow if it's dark again, and let us soon go to father and mother, for Jesus Christ's sake.—Amen."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SOLDIERS' RETURN.

THE next thing to be considered was the matter of provisions for the little Clevelands.

Black children could, and did, live entirely on vegetables and sugar-cane, with an occasional meal of salt fish, but English children were not accustomed to this fare, and would, in all probability, not keep well upon it.

Anyhow should they have so to live, they must be brought to it by degrees.

There was a little money to go on with. Young Missis' purse, that Nana had found in her pocket, contained a few pounds, and Jimmy and Nana had also saved a little.

This must be well spent.

A barrel of flour would be a useful thing to have, for with it bread and Johnnie cakes could be made. These latter were little cakes of unleavened bread. The children were very fond of "Johnnie cakes," and could not well do without bread.

Nana and Jimmy would keep a little money in hand to buy a little meat from time to time, and if they could manage to purchase a few fowls and

scrape together a small poultry yard, it would be a great help to them.

Then Meyrick and Meta must have boots at once, so the money would not go far.

They had only carried one pair of boots for each child with them unto the bush, and these were nearly worn out already.

Jimmy would go one morning very soon to Morant Bay and make these purchases; to-morrow he purposed to make one more journey to Woodlands, and gather all he could from the property, such as yam heads which would be very useful now that he had so large a family to provide for at "The Retreat," and he would catch and bring up all the fowls he could, but he must not loiter on the road, for fear of being seen, and he must transact his business very quickly.

Thoney, meanwhile, was to stay and build a little fowl-house, and put up sheds for the goat and kids. During the seasons it would not do for the kids to have no shelter, and if the fowls laid in the bush, they might lose half the eggs. Besides which, for a time, the fowls would be strange here, so must be penned.

These were the arrangements made, which were all carried out in time.

The next morning Jimmy started with three empty baskets, put one in another, which he hoped to bring back from Woodlands quite full. It seemed very dreadful when he arrived to miss the "Great House" from the spot where he had been accustomed to see it stand for so many happy years; and much

of its ashes even had now been washed away by the rain.

Jimmy stood for a moment beside his master and mistress's grave, and then he set about his work. He dug yams, sweet potatoes and cocos, then he cut several branches of bananas and plantains, he gathered bread-fruit, two ripe pumpkins, then plenty of oranges and limes, and lastly he picked guavas for Miss Meta so as to make her some guava jelly, her favourite preserve.

Having filled two baskets with provisions he tied them together, and then hunted for fowls. They seemed very much scattered. No doubt the fire had terrified them, and wandering away they had been seized by black men and women, who would have been very glad to have them.

The fowl-house was burnt down, but no fowls had been within it, as, of course, it had been left all open for the fowls to go in and out when the family fled to the bush.

Because it rained heavily some of the fowls that still remained had now taken shelter from the rain in the coffee-store, whither the fire had not extended, and in the store also Jimmy found a few eggs. He was very glad to have these, but another sight gladdened his heart far more. Mars' Meyrick's own hen was in the coffee-store with eleven dear little chicks, that she must have hatched very lately.

Mars' Meyrick had often said that he thought his hen must be sitting somewhere, for he never saw her during the day, and the fowl-girl had told

him that she only came in the early morning to be fed. Mars' Meyrick would be glad when Jimmy carried back his own top-knot hen and all those pretty little chicks.

The hen and chicks Jimmy placed, when he had caught them, in a hand-basket, and then procuring four other fowls he loosely tied their legs and carried them under his arms. The vegetable baskets he had to balance on his head. In one of these he stowed his eggs.

Thus laden, Jimmy left Woodlands to return to "The Retreat," and he only stepped out of the road into bye-paths just in time, for a few minutes later the soldiers, returning to town, came upon the public road.

They had been to the cave to seek for Nana and the children, and when they found that they were gone from thence they proceeded to Woodlands. Finding this a heap of ashes, they supposed that the servants having seen the fire, and fearing to keep the little children any longer in the bush, had carried them to Kingston, the capital and chief town of Jamaica.

The soldiers had much to do, and were obliged to move on quickly.

The drenching rain they also considered a good reason for having removed the children, and they themselves having been so long in returning was another excuse for the nurse to have disobeyed their orders.

They then walked on, and meeting two women on the road, with loads on their heads, they asked

them if they had seen any little English children pass that way.

"Yes," they answered, following a negro rule of saying "yes," hardly ever "no," when asked a question, whether the person questioned means yes or no.

But these women had another reason for saying "yes" to the soldiers, when asked if the children had passed, although they knew nothing about them and who, as it happened, had gone quite in another direction; for these women belonged to the rebel party, and wanted the soldiers out of the way.

In this manner, unwittingly, they helped the cause of the little Clevelands, for the soldiers marched on, and what with the inconvenience to which they were put in consequence of the heavy rain that had so swollen the rivers that the soldiers lost their boots in crossing them, and one thing after another which they had to consider as they went along; they thought but little again of the children until they reached Newcastle, the hill station, and as they had heard nothing more of them on the road, they then concluded that the servants, in whose trustworthiness and fidelity they fully relied, had most probably taken them for present shelter to one of the great houses in the mountains which were now out of danger of being attacked any more by rebels, and thus the little English children passed out of the soldiers' thoughts.

Jimmy would have been very thankful could he have known how well, so far, his plans had answered!

CHAPTER XXIII.

DREARY DAYS.

THE remainder of that day was wet, the next day it rained again, and so on for nearly a fortnight, this causing it to be a very dreary time for the little family shut up in Jimmy's house.

But on many days there were a few hours when the rain held up, and then the children played outside for a short time and watched Jimmy and Thoney work. When it was dry enough they saw Jimmy dig his yams and sweet potatoes, and they helped him to sow his new corn and potato slips.

Then they fed the tame kids out of their hands, which gave them great pleasure.

The fowls had very soon grown accustomed to the place, and were let out to wander about as they liked. They came often to the hut door to be fed.

Meyrick was delighted with his top-knot hen and little chickens, and told Jimmy that it was almost the best thing he could have brought him. Frisky would be better (Frisky was Meyrick's pony).

The little boy clapped his hands with delight as Jimmy opened the basket and lifted them out.

"And you know, Meta," he whispered to his sister,

when she looked sad because she had no chickens, "Nana did say that you might have one of the kids for your own, didn't she, and I'll give you three of the chicks, and you shall choose which ones you like best."

"Thank you," said Meta, "I'll have that for one," and as she spoke she pointed to a tiny quite pure white one, on whom a little top-knot already showed.

"All right, you shall," answered Meyrick, "but you know that was my favourite; isn't it a sweet pretty little thing, Jimmy?"

"Pretty fe true, Mars' Meyrick."

There were only two chickens who had already top-knots, and this was one of them.

Then Jimmy also gave Meta one of the large hens to have for her own, so she was well off.

"And you know, Meta," said her brother, "you'll be much richer than *me*, because Jimmy says that hen's laying, and if you let her sit, she'll have a number of little chicks too, and you've got three of mine to start with besides the kid."

Meta looked very pleased.

"Wasn't that mother's own hen, Nana?" asked the little girl.

"Of course it was," answered Meyrick, not giving Nana time to speak; "it was her favourite of all our hens, and she raised it too, didn't she, Nana?"

"Yes," said their nurse, "and it lay plenty egg."

"I shall take great care of it as it was mother's, mustn't I, Nana?" asked Meta. "Of course you must," said Meyrick, "and I'll help you, if you like, because you can't do much alone. Shall you let her sit?"

"I think so," replied Meta, "shall I, do you think?"

"I should if I were you," said Meyrick, "because most likely the seasons will be quite over by then, and it will be nice dry weather for the little ones to be hatched, and then you might have a good brood."

Jimmy's coffee was now ripe and ready to gather. He had a good-sized coffee piece or field, which his master had helped him to plant four years ago, with young trees. These were bearing now for the second time, and Jimmy hoped to make several pounds out of them.

"I'll help you pick coffee, Jimmy, as soon as the rain holds up," Meyrick said one day.

"All right, Mars' Meyrick."

But although the wet fortnight seemed very long and dreary, the little boy had never really grumbled since that first day; Meta, poor little girl, had often done so.

It was a terrible change for these little ones, no father, no mother, no great house in which they could spend part of their days in one room, part of them in another, no reading, no picture-books, no toys; was it any wonder that they longed for the rain to go that they might, at all events, get oftener out of doors, and that sometimes Meyrick said to himself, and Meta said out loud, that they thought they would rather be anywhere than here? But when Jimmy had time to sit down and let Meyrick clamber on to his lap and have little Miss Meta there too, whilst he told them many an amusing story, which he could tell so well, the children were comforted and amused, and Meyrick thought again that Jimmy, Thoney and

Nana did all they could for them and could not help it being so horrid here, and he was very glad that God heard his prayer and helped him not to grumble. Then, too, Meyrick would try and remember true stories that he knew, and would in turn tell them to Jimmy and Meta.

Sometimes Jimmy knew a true story also, not out of a history-book, but out of the every day life of people he had known, and this he would tell to the children, and if it happened to be about some little child who had not kind parents, or some other one whose parents were dead and had left it lonely and unloved, Meyrick and Meta said one to another that these little children were worse off than themselves, because they had some one to love them, and perhaps, they thought, it might not be so very long before they saw father and mother again!

Jimmy was very fond of telling these children by way of comfort "Him whom God love Him flog," by which he meant them to believe as he himself tried to do, that "whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," but they could not understand anything of this.

Little Francis was now looking very pale, so were his brother and sister, but Jamaica at its best is not a country where children have roses on their faces, as they have so often in England.

Very likely Francis missed the cow's milk to which at home he had been accustomed, and then of course the rain prevented him from getting much fresh air, which is almost as necessary to us as food.

Jimmy had been to Morant Bay, and from thence

had brought back with him a piece of beef, some salt fish, bread, a barrel of flour, two tins of Swiss milk, a little butter, a tin of potted meat, and other little necessaries. He also did not forget the boots.

As yet the children had had plenty to eat since they came to "The Retreat."

Their first meal in the day was what was called "first tea," at half-past six o'clock in the morning, which consisted of a piece of bread or a plantain and a little Swiss milk. For breakfast, which followed at ten o'clock, they had some salt fish and yam or coco; with this they drank water. At dinner, at about half-past three, they had some meat and vegetables, with an orange sometimes afterwards; and for tea, at half-past six, they had a little bread and butter, or bread and milk and very weak tea. Once or twice they had had an egg for breakfast. But Jimmy had spent nearly all his money at Morant Bay, so the good servants said amongst themselves that they must be more careful in future.

The beef lasted very well, for the men eat little of it. The first day Nana roasted it, the next the children had it cold, then Nana cooked it with scallion, and it was still not finished.

Sometimes Thoney asked Jimmy what they would do when the money was all gone, and he generally received the same answer, "De Lord 'll pervide."

There was no time-piece of any description at "The Retreat," so the family had to guess the time for meals, and for getting up, and going to bed, by their appetites and the sun.

Having nothing to do seemed to make the children

very hungry, and often Thoney would bring them knots of sugar-cane to suck, which they liked very much.

Both Jimmy and Thoney grew sugar-cane on their grounds.

And then *at last*, as Meyrick said, the rain did leave off, and it was much "nicer" now.

Children, and grown-up people also, soon grow accustomed to any kind of life that they must lead, and it was not long before the negro-hut life suited Meyrick very well, and seemed the regular life for him to lead. He could not feel happy or satisfied as long as the rain lasted, and those dark shutters had to be up, but when the bright sun shone so brightly that even because it was too bright, the shutters had to be again half-closed, it all seemed so different and cheerful. What should we do in, or out of, the tropics without the glorious sunshine to brighten and cheer our existence?

And then Jimmy, for the children's sake, went to one more expense. He bought some glass, and instead of one of the shutters, he put in a window. They were very pleased when this was done.

But meanwhile everybody kept on wondering where was the lost baby Sydney? What could have become of him? Often had Nana asked Thoney to go out and look for him, and he had gone, but quite useless, quite fruitless had been his journey of search. To know where that baby was Nana felt that she would have given all she had!

CHAPTER XXIV.

LITTLE COFFEE-PICKERS.

"LOOK, Jimmy, me all ready an me got basket, an Meta him hab one too," sang out Meyrick one morning to imitate the coffee-pickers, as the two children followed the man to his coffee-trees growing in close rows up a hill, not many yards from the "little house," both carrying a basket on their heads, "we'll help well, won't we, Meta?"

Thoney, when the party joined him, was already hard at work gathering the coffee-berries; indeed he had by then filled one basket which he was just emptying into a large canvas bag lying on the ground beside him.

Jimmy put the two children to gather from low bushes where it was shady, for it would not do for them to stand in the sun.

"That isn't what you are to pick, Meta," Meyrick called out rather sharply after a little while. Meta did not quite understand that only the red berries were ripe, and that the green and yellow ones had to be left on the tree longer, and Meyrick when he spoke saw her drop into her basket several that were quite unripe.

"You wouldn't do for a coffee-picker, you'd have a quotti a bushel stopped every day you picked like that."

"I shouldn't," answered Meta, speaking petulantly, "you would yourself."

"I didn't mean to be cross, Meta," said her brother going up and kissing her, "but you know I must teach you or you'd never know anything," and to make up for his momentary rough speaking, the little fellow dropped a handful of the beautiful ripe coffee-berries he had gathered into his sister's basket.

"The yellow isn't as bad as the green," he went on, "but they're neither of them ripe you know. I don't think father used to stop a quotti for the yellow ones, but still they are not ripe, so you mustn't pick them again."

After this lesson Meta picked only the red berries, and Meyrick felt that giving her such a good lesson must be a "first rate" way of looking after her.

Her little fingers were very busy that morning, and she quite filled her basket before she gave up and went in to Nana.

Meyrick worked longer than his sister and gathered more than a basket and a half of berries.

After that, until the coffee was all picked, even if Jimmy and Thoney were at other work, Meyrick and Meta constantly took their baskets and went to gather coffee, and when all the good berries were gathered they picked up the rat coffee, which consisted of those berries that the rats had pulped to eat their sweet, outer skin, and had then let fall under the trees; so the children were very useful on

Jimmy's ground, and seemed thoroughly to like their occupation.

But Nana had very often to call to them to keep out of the sun, as they frequently wandered into it.

One thing Jimmy had promised to buy her for the children the next time he went to Morant Bay, and that was a large straw sun-hat each, without any trimming on it. This would, she knew, be cheap, and it was most necessary that they should have something that would really shade their faces well from the sun,

Nana's work-basket that Jimmy had rescued from the fire had proved most useful, for it contained needles, cotton, and all sorts of little odds and ends, above all two pairs of scissors, with one of which Meyrick's curls had been cut off, and he said it was ever so much cooler without them. They were cut off, to his great joy, the day they came to "The Retreat." Still the curls had been very useful in one way, and that was to keep the sun from off his neck, but fortunately in the basket was a puggery that Nana had begun to make for one of Meyrick's hats, just before they left Woodlands, and this she now very quickly finished, and when she sewed it on to his hat, it shielded his neck, he said, much better than the curls.

Meta thought Meyrick looked so funny at first without his curls, their being cut off certainly made a difference to his appearance, but Thoney said a "good differance," for he admired his little master very much now and said he looked "fust rate," and "manly fe true."

One day when the children were called in for tea (they were generally out of doors at that time, as there was then a shade over the hills, that made Jimmy's garden delightfully cool and just the place for them to be working in and watering) they saw a beautiful plate of honey on the table, "such lovely fresh honey" Meta said, and so it was, all oozing from the comb.

"Have you just been cutting it?" Meta exclaimed; "we never heard you."

"No, Miss Meta, dis from Thoney's ground, I no cut mine jis yet."

"When you do we may see you, mayn't we?" she asked.

"Yes, Jimmy," said Meyrick, "I should think we might help you cut it."

"If you help, p'raps you get too close, Mars' Meyrick, and then bees sting you."

"We wouldn't come too near, Jimmy, but p'raps we'd better not help in case the bees stung Meta, but you'll let us look on, won't you?"

"Yes, Mars' Meyrick, dat best, you look on an' you eat when him cut. Us must try cut plenty honey, it good ting we hab honey, now us no butter."

"I like honey better than butter," said Meta, and as Thoney watched the children enjoy the fresh honey he had put upon the table for them, after fetching it from his home, he was very glad that he had kept bees and had looked after them well lately. Everything came in so usefully now and was most welcome.

CHAPTER XXV.

A HISTORY LESSON.

"I WANT a book," Meyrick said one day after tea, "oh I want a book so much, it is dull without books. Oh Nana, isn't it a dreadful pity that our nice books got burnt, and all our toys and good clothes? If I'd only my play horse even I could give Meta a ride sometimes, and we're getting very shabby now, Nana, arn't we?" he added, holding up a very patched leg.

It grieved Nana very much to see how rapidly the children's clothes were wearing out, and many a stitch had she put into them since coming to "The Retreat." For Meta she had already made a frock out of a dress of her mother's, and she hoped to make Francis one soon, but now there was not always time for needlework.

The cottage was rather close for Francis, and since the weather had been fine enough, Nana had sat outside with him of an afternoon, under a tree, and had there worked. No one could imagine how many things Nana now wanted for the children which she could not have.

So many things she missed, both small and large, and there seemed to be no chance at present of getting them.

She seemed constantly to be washing out clothes, and yet not to have them clean and dry when they were required, and the constant washing was rapidly wearing out the few things that the children possessed. Nana now told Meyrick that she hoped they would be able to have some new clothes soon, and very often, poor thing, had she wished that she had some toys to give the children to play with that they might be amused and kept quiet.

"If I'd only some book," Meyrick went on—"mine is too difficult, and so is Jimmy's—I might teach Meta how to read. She's sure to forget all she learnt with mother."

"And you'll forget too," answered the little girl, not altogether liking the patronizing air that Meyrick had assumed towards her since he had felt it to be his duty to take care of her.

"I am sure to remember longer than you, Meta, because I've learnt longer, and I'm older. Let me see, if you've forgotten already, I'll ask you a question. Who was it that went to hide himself from the Danes and hid at a goatherd's cottage in Somerset?"

"I know it all," quickly interrupted Meta, glad this time to be even with Meyrick; "King Alfred went to hide himself in the cottage and he burnt the cakes and she was very angry and said he should not eat any as he could not mind them well."

"Who said that?"

"The man's wife."

"Yes, you know that, but you won't know the next thing, I guess," said the would-be master. "Who fought the battles of Naseby and Marston Moor?"

Meyrick himself had a capital memory for history, but he had been refreshing it very much lately by reading the book Jimmy had brought him from Woodlands, and he certainly had not enough patience with his little sister.

"I don't know," said Meta.

"Think, what are we—you, Francis and me?"

"Children?" asked the little girl.

"No, what kind of children?"

"White?"

"No, what do people call us, we're not Jamaica children or French or anything but just—"

"English," said Meta.

"Of course, now who fought?"

"We didn't," answered the child, "the English?"

"Yes, but when we play French and English you know there are always two sides, and when people fight there are two sides too, who else—at least what other side fought?"

"The French?" asked Meta.

"No, don't you remember who fought against—?" Meyrick did not know exactly how to put the question.

"The English?" chimed in Meta.

"Against half of them?"

"The other half," answered the little pupil, after great consideration.

"Which half?"

"The half that was left."

"But what half was left, oh you are too stupid Meta when I've told you nearly all."

"What was the name of the half that beat the other

half at Naseby and Marston Moor?" asked Meyrick quite impatiently.

"I don't know," said the child, "I can't know when I haven't learnt, tell me."

"Why the Parliament beat King Charles the First's army at both those places, and then they had his head cut off afterwards."

"Oh, poor man!" said Meta.

"But you must remember all this now, Meta," said her brother, "for it's not a bit of good my telling you if you forget again. What are the names of the battles?"

"Charles I.," said Meta, who was now only thinking of the poor man who had had his head cut off; she did not care to hear about battles like Meyrick did, to whom the account of any battle was very interesting.

"Oh how very stupid you are, Meta," now said Meyrick, with a deep drawn sigh. "I tell you it's Naseby and Marston Moor, and it was Cromwell at the head of the Parliament that beat the king and then had his head cut off."

"I remembered that," said Meta whimpering, "and you didn't ask me."

"Well, who had his head cut off?"

"The king. Why did they cut his head off, Meyrick?"

Here the little teacher felt puzzled himself, but he would not let Meta see that he had any difficulty in answering her question.

"They oughtn't to have done it," he answered; "but I must not teach you any more now," he added,

"or you will forget what you have learnt; if you like I'll read about it to you one day in my book."

"Is there a picture of it?" asked Meta.

"There's one of Marston Moor, look here," he said as he fetched the book and showed his little sister the picture, "and as I've got to take care of you," he went on, "you may look at all the pictures by yourself. I can't spare any more time now, but don't let Francis get at the book to tear it, and don't be so stupid next time I give you a lesson, will you?"

"I'm not stupid, am I, Nana?" asked Meta.

"No," answered the nurse, "you too bad to Meta, Mars' Meyrick, she younger than you, you know."

"I know she is, Nana, and that's why I try to teach her, of course."

"It almost time go bed now," said Jimmy, reaching the Bible off the table, as was his wont every night, and reading part of a chapter aloud, Meyrick looking over his shoulder and helping him with the long words, for Meyrick was a very good reader for his age, but Jimmy read the Testament very well too; and if a very long word came both man and boy were apt to pronounce it wrongly.

Meyrick told Jimmy that it was no wonder he read his Testament so well, as "father" had taught him to do that.

The two children listened very attentively, and when Jimmy closed his Bible they stood and said their hymns to Nana as they used to say them to mother, and then Meta and Francis were put to bed in the next room.

Sometimes Meyrick wished to read a little more,

and then he, Jimmy and Thoney would do so together. Jimmy wanted Thoney to learn to love his Bible also.

When Meta was in bed Meyrick said "Good-night," and went to bed too, and often before Meyrick was asleep the rest of the little household followed his example.

All the inmates of "The Retreat" seemed to believe in the good old adage "early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Jimmy, Thoney and Nana were up and at work very early in the morning, but they burnt very little candle or lamp in the evening.

It was dark at about half past six or seven, there was hardly any twilight, and no one was ever to be found up at Jimmy's house after eight o'clock.

The children also were early risers, for the early morning in the tropics is a very favourite time of day.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CARRIAGE DRIVE.

IT was the first fine Sunday since "the seasons" had begun.

Sunday had seemed a more than usually dull day at "The Retreat," and now Meyrick begged Jimmy, oh so hard, to take him to church.

At home the children had been accustomed to go to church every Sunday with their parents, sometimes in the carriage and sometimes on horseback. When they went on horseback, Meyrick rode his little brown pony and Meta was carried by her father, in front of his horse, or by Jimmy in front of the one he rode.

They never walked to church, the heat was too great and the distance too far; now Meyrick would have been glad to go anyhow, but Jimmy told the little fellow that it would not be safe to take either him or Meta, for people would see them, and if they did not recognize them, would wonder what little English children they were, and the magistrates would find out where they lived and come and take them away and perhaps send them to England.

So Meyrick made up his mind to stay at home,

and he and Jimmy read a little of the Bible, said a few prayers, and then the men, Nana, and the children, sang some hymns to the tunes their mother had taught them, till it was time to get dinner ready, and amuse Francis who had been asleep during prayers, and so the morning passed.

Meyrick and Meta sucked sugar-cane whilst they watched Nana make some banana fritters for Sunday's dinner.

After dinner Thoney came to Meyrick and told him that he would give him a drive in a carriage, to make up for not going to church in one this morning; and then he went to a mountain cabbage-palm tree growing near, and picking up a withered branch that had yesterday fallen from off it, he brought it to act as a carriage to take the children for a drive, he himself being the horse to draw it along.

This branch was about ten feet long, and had very many leaflets. The end of it, and the part that had adhered to the tree, was like a large, dried skin that had shrivelled up into the shape of a small boat.

In this the two children sat, one in front of the other, whilst Thoney took hold of the end of the branch and dragged them along, and when Thoney didn't go quick enough Meyrick said that he must change horses now, and fetching Jimmy "put him in" instead.

Thus for more than an hour the two men amused the little children, and even Francis was placed in the novel kind of carriage and, to his great delight, was drawn along with his brother and sister.

Often after this the children had a drive in their

carriage, and Meyrick found out a nice place that would do for "a stable" for it, and as soon as it was finished with for one day he put it up in this stable.

The children could play with their carriage even without the help of the men, for it was so easy to draw, that Meyrick could give Meta short drives in it himself.

For tea that Sunday evening Nana had made Johnnie-cakes, and she had stewed some guavas with sugar, which made a very nice preserve, so the first fine Sunday at Jimmy's house was celebrated in more ways than one.

But how was little Sydney celebrating his first fine Sunday? Poor little fellow, how much Nana longed and longed to know; also the children, who constantly as the days now passed quickly for them, asked, "What can have become of little Sydney?"

We shall see what became of him in the next chapter.

The servants now thought it best to tell the children that he had gone to his father and mother, for they could satisfy them in no other way, and Jimmy and Thoney really thought by now that the poor little child must be dead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MAROON FERN HUT.

"SINCE when nigger like you have white pick'ninnies?" the Maroon had said to Letitia.

She could, of course, give no answer to this question, and began to quarrel with the men, demanding to have the child returned to her.

They refused to return the baby, and asked her where and how she had come by him, threatening to have her punished if she did not give them an answer.

At length Letitia was very thankful to be able to make her escape from these Maroons, leaving the baby, still wrapped up in her shawl, in their possession, and to return to her father, though she had failed after all to bring him one of the children on whom he had so counted.

The Maroons continued their journey in an opposite direction, one of the men carrying the baby, who gave them more than enough to do in trying to pacify him. He was terrified at the appearance of so many strangers, and he was growing more and more hungry every moment.

The rain still poured down in torrents, and it was a difficult matter to keep the little child dry.

Presently they saw a goat. This they caught and milked into little Syd's bottle, which they had taken from Letitia, and the poor little hungry boy drank eagerly the nice, fresh goat's milk which they then offered to him, and whilst he drank he fell asleep again, and enabled the men to settle amongst themselves what to do with him.

Most of these men came from the Maroon settlement at Charles Town, two of them were, however, from Nannêe Town, another Maroon settlement, further inland.

There was a debate amongst the men what was best to be done with the baby.

No doubt he belonged to some white family that had fled from the disturbed districts, the Maroons having heard that a day or two ago not one white family remained in the whole of these surrounding districts, every one having either fled overland to Kingston, or having made for the seacoast to take refuge on board a man-of-war lying off Morant Bay.

This child must have been stolen from one of these families, and it was better for them to guard him as safely as possible until order was so far restored that all the different families had returned to their various mountain homes.

As Nannêe Town was by far the nearer of the two settlements, it was decided, amongst the men, that the two from there should take possession of the child, and carry him to one or other of their homes as soon as possible. They were both married.

For to-night they were to keep him in a fern hut

which they would knock up, the other men remaining to help them do this. The Maroons could quickly and easily make one of these huts on an emergency.

It took them now one hour to build it between them.

First they procured two stout sticks which they drove into the ground, about six feet apart, fastening with green withs, a long pole, at the top, from post to post.

Six or eight smaller sticks placed on the ground, to lean slantingly against the pole, formed the roof. One gableend was left open for the tall doorway.

On this the men laid quantities of fern leaves, which kept out the rain.

When the little house was built, the builders took possession of it, lighted a fire in the doorway and cooked a dinner of yams and cocos, which they carried in their satchels.

Sydney cried very bitterly again when he awoke to find himself inside the hut with so many strangers, and he sorely missed his Nana. But, baby though he was, he could soon tell that he was amongst friends, and kind ones too; for these men of rough exterior had tender hearts and coaxed and petted the little fellow, taking off his own damp clothes to lay out before the fire to dry, whilst they wrapped him in one of their own cloaks.

Then one of the Maroons went out and shot a ring-tail, cooked it and cut up a small portion into very little pieces, which they gave to Sydney mixed with a very little roast yam.

He eat with appetite, and then the Maroons gave

him some mint tea which put him into a deep s
from which he only awoke in the morning.

The two Nannêe Town men willingly went
out their cloaks, the one in which Syddy was wra
the other on which they laid him down to sleep.

Having finished their dinner, all the men bu
two who were to take charge of the child, lef
hut to continue their search for Paul Bogle,
could little Syd have known all that had bef
him, as he was left behind in the fern hut, so cle
erected to protect him from rain and damp, he w
have been very thankful to have passed out o
hands of rebels into those of Maroons.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MAROONS.

THE Maroons, a wild tribe inhabiting the mountains of Jamaica, were originally some slaves that ran away from the early Spanish settlers, and associated with the few remaining aborigines who outlived Spanish cruelties.

They settled themselves in remote and numerous fastnesses in the island, and when it was captured by the English from the Spaniards, many negroes abandoned by their masters betook themselves to the woods and joined the Maroons, some of the Spaniards also joining them themselves for a time.

The Spaniards instigated the black to fight against the white race, and for a while there was an evenly-balanced war kept up, till dogs were imported from Cuba to be sent against the Maroons.

It has been thought that these dogs were sent against them all, and that they were inhumanly tortured by them, but such is not the case, for on the arrival of the dogs at Montego Bay, the Maroons were told that three days would be given them in which to surrender, and they all came in except one notorious fellow who alone was captured by the dogs.

The Maroons at Montego Bay were then sent first to Nova Scotia and afterwards to Sierra Leone.

There were other detachments of Maroons who were not conquered, but became allies and received portions of land, as their own, on which to live.

These are the Maroons who, to this day, are situated in many parts of the island of Jamaica, and these are also the men who rescued little Sydney Cleveland, most of whom were living in Charles Town in St. Thomas in the East; that band of Maroons having co-operated with the English in putting down the outbreak of negroes in that parish.

Their home was a village in the Cūnhacūnha Mountains, commonly known as Charles Town.

One peculiarity of the Maroons is a habit of holding themselves aloof from other black inhabitants of the country, maintaining a superiority over them.

Many of the Maroons are very good-looking, which probably arises from the mixture of Caribbean and Spanish blood in their veins.

They have amongst themselves a semblance of military government and their captains of companies exercise great control over the rest of the men.

For thefts amongst one another they seldom appeal to the ordinary law courts, but prefer to decide all cases themselves.

The Maroon women carry loads on their heads just like other native women of Jamaica, but Maroons always work on August 1, Emancipation Day from slavery, which is a great holiday with other black inhabitants of the country, as though this festival had nothing to do with them.

Nannêe Town, whither Jimbo and Joe were to carry the English baby on the following morning to find a home, was a great refuge of the Maroons before peace.

This place is a most curious and awfully romantic spot, situated near the base of the northern slope of the Blue Mountain, Blue Mountain Peak towering above it.

The valley is like a spur jutting out from this Mountain, enclosing in a circle a valley of about 100 acres.

Nannêe Town is a town really only in name. Numerous huts are there scattered about in spots safe from the bullets of soldiers, and the descending avalanches of boulders, which, occasionally getting loose, fall from the sides of the Blue Mountain, thundering down into Nannêe Town, and carrying a number of small boulders with them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE JOURNEY TO NANNÊE TOWN.

THE next morning, as we already know, was very wet, for it was the day on which the move from the cave to Jimmy's house was effected by the other little Clevelands, but like Jimmy, the Maroon men knew that in October it was of little use to put off anything on account of weather that was better done at once, so very early in the morning they set out with little Syd for Nannêe Town.

They gave him a good breakfast before they started, and in their knapsacks the men carried luncheon for him by the way, but in spite of the men's kindness, the poor little fellow seemed at first greatly terrified. He was of an age to know that he was no longer with his Nana, to miss, no doubt, his big brother and sister and little twin brother from whom he had never been, for many moments, separated before, and perhaps even the memory of his gentle, loving mother had not been quite effaced from his baby mind, although the memory of a baby is very, very short. Not one of any of these friends could he see now, and many a time did he

express his sorrow, whatever caused it, by crying loudly.

But one of the men had young children of his own, and carried Syd so lovingly that he could not fail to be somewhat comforted, for at a very tender age we appreciate and recognize the care that springs from love and sympathy, and these men were so sorry for the poor, little, well-dressed white baby who, they felt sure, must have been torn ruthlessly from a happy home of comfort, that they did all in their power now to make him as happy as they could, and resolved so soon as they could find out to whom he belonged to restore him to his parents, should they be still living.

He was dressed again in his own clothes, now quite dry, that pretty frock his mother had worked for him, which Nana had put on whilst she washed his others, because it was the only one clean; the cloak on which he had slept last night was wrapped all round him, and Jimbo held a plantain-leaf over the little delicate face to keep every drop of rain from off it.

The Rio Grande river rises in the Maroon refuge of Nannêe Town, and escapes by a cavernous gorge, or flow, on one side, making it impossible for the Maroons to reach their home without either scaling very precipitous mountains and cliffs that surround the village on all sides, or by swimming up the gorge.

The latter the men usually preferred to do, but with the river swollen, and carrying a little child, this was impossible to-day, so Jimbo and Joe climbed

up the steep cliffs, and though they walked as briskly as they could, it was past mid-day when at last the valley of Nannêe Town was reached and little Syd Cleveland was introduced into his new home amongst the Maroons.

CHAPTER XXX.

CUTTING HONEY.

"THE honey, Meta, the honey," Meyrick cried out, as he ran into the cottage one day, where the little girl sat beside Nana trying, as she said, "to be making" her doll a pinafore. "Jimmy and Thoney are just going to cut it, so I came in to tell you. Don't I take care of you well, because you do want to see them cut it, don't you?"

"Yes," she answered, jumping up suddenly, and throwing down her doll's pinafore beside Nana's work-basket, for she also had been at work and now put it aside to follow Meyrick with the little girl.

Francis was asleep, so could be safely left for a few minutes.

The swarm of bees was only in the garden, a few steps away from the house.

Jimmy's garden was the only portion of his ground not up-hill.

The first thing now to be done was to light a fire of dried grass and bits of bush, which Meyrick had already helped Jimmy to gather. Nana, with a long twig, then stirred busily the lighted leaves so as to cause a great smoke to arise from them.

Jimmy then lifted the box in which were the bees

and the honey they had made, held it for a few minutes over the fire and then placed it again on the ground, this time leaving the top, on which was no lid, uppermost. Over this the men put another box, leaving a small crevice, or opening, between the two.

Then Jimmy and Thoney, one with a stick, the other with a stone hammered the lower box, first on one side and then on the other, till the bees, frightened by the noise and stupefied by the smoke of the fire, flew out of it, most of them into the upper box, but some escaped through the crevice, and swarmed all about the low trees, keeping as near together as possible. There were some hundreds of bees now flying here and there, but the smoke so stunned them that they stung nobody, still as it was possible that they might do so, the children were not allowed to stand too near.

"Now comes the best part of it," said Meyrick, as Nana put the large pieces of the comb that Thoney picked out of the box, in which by now very few bees remained, into two basins which she had carried with her into the garden for that purpose.

"Why don't you put it all together, Nana?" asked Meta.

"Some honey and some only wax," said Nana.

"Are you going to pull another box now Jimmy?" asked Meyrick.

"No, Mars' Meyrick, other boxes don't fat yet?"

"This is a very fat box, though."

"Yes, well fat fe true."

"What a noise those bees are making?" then said Meta.

"Yes, dem cross dem loss dem food."

"Poor little bees," said Meta, who had a very feeling little heart.

"You'd call them poor, I expect, if you knew more about them," said Meyrick, "wouldn't she, Jimmy? That honey's their food for when it rains and they can't get out and work, and every time they make it it gets taken from them, and they make every bit of it themselves, comb and all, don't they Jimmy?"

"Yes," answered the man, who like the little boy was glad to give instruction when he could, "see here de comb, dem bees make dat first, dere queen bee lay eggs, em hatch, grow big, an' ole bees turn dem pick'ninnies out, dem fill plenty cells wid honey, see here dem pick'ninny side," he continued, pointing to some cells in which were young bees, "dem pick-'ninnies, no wings yet."

"Show me the queen bee," said Meta.

"I no see him, him in new box along wid de rest; him go first an oders follow."

"And what becomes of the young bees, Jimmy, when they're turned out?"

"Dem make fresh swarm, hang on branch of tree one on oder's back first, an' if me can get dem me put dem in new box, but if me no can find dem, em make new swarm oder parts, in rock may be."

"What will the bees do in that new box they've gone to," asked Meta, "are they not very sorry because you've taken their honey?"

"Dem no lose time in being much sorry, dem begin

at once make more honey, an' till honey made, dem pick an' eat flowers."

"You know, Meta, it's worse for bees in England, mother once told us so, don't you remember?" asked Meyrick, "because it gets cold winter there, and then there arn't flowers for the bees to get food from, so people have to feed them, but bees have plenty of flowers here. When will that new box be full, Jimmy?" then asked the little boy.

"Come May," answered the man.

"Six months, oh Jimmy, that is a long time to work, and then you'll take the honey again, I suppose."

"Don't take it, Jimmy, next time," said Meta.

"Him used to it," replied Jimmy, "an' him eat flowers, if weader no dry us mus feed him wid sugar and water."

The children then followed Jimmy and Nana to the house, outside of which Jimmy had put a table before he went to cut the honey. On this the two basins were placed, the one containing the honey being watched most intently by Meyrick and Meta.

"What's the good of the wax?" asked the little girl, "and why isn't there any honey in that?"

"Bees suck it out, or else young bees once dere."

"Is it any good now?"

"Yes, us sell it for shilling a pound to polish floors."

Nana then gave Meyrick and Meta each a large piece of the comb full of honey, Francis had a very small piece, Jimmy, Nana and Thoney had some also, and even Pedro would not allow himself to be

forgotten, for he was very fond of honey and came for his share.

Then Nana squeezed most of the rest of the honey into a third basin (Jimmy had fortunately bought several basins when he went to Morant Bay), and threw the pieces of comb as they were emptied to the wax.

One large piece of honey-comb was reserved for the table. Lacking a piece of muslin to strain the honey, when it was squeezed out of the comb, it was poured through a clean basket.

This answered the same purpose, and then the honey was poured into bottles, corked down, and put on one side to be ready for the children to eat with bread or rice.

But Jimmy made another use of some of the wax. He put it into the basin with which Nana had just finished, a little honey having stuck to it, and adding some water and the juice of an orange, he made, what he called, punch—honey punch for himself and Thoney. This they liked very much, and Meyrick and Meta had a taste of it too.

The children were seldom denied anything that it lay in the power of their faithful friends to give them, unless what they wanted would do them harm.

"First-rate," said Meyrick, "good for true, isn't it, Meta?"

"Yes," answered the little girl, "but I like the honey best."

Francis had awakened directly the party came near to the cottage. The excitement caused by the

honey made Meyrick and Meta too noisy to allow him to sleep.

How often even on that one afternoon Nana wondered how it fared with his twin brother, and if he too had what he desired. She feared not.

"I'm going to take off my boots and socks now," said Meta, who was growing quite accustomed to be bare-footed when indoors Nana allowed her to take them off, indeed even the new boots were anything but new now, and the only way to keep the children's feet shod out of doors was to let them be bare-footed when at home.

The children liked the fun, but it grieved Nana to see Mars' Cleveland's pick'ninnies often obliged to go bare-footed, although she knew that several little English children in Jamaica sometimes took off their shoes and stockings in their nurseries in order to play about more comfortably, and to cool their feet.

In many ways the little Clevelands now lived like native children in Jamaica.

In the stream not far from "The Retreat" most mornings they had their bath, and often during the day Thoney would take Meyrick there to paddle in the water and gather watercress.

The honey being all cleared away, Nana now went back to her work. The children's clothes, so fast wearing out, must be incessantly patched and mended.

How much Nana would have liked to make the little ones mourning clothes for their parents, but she had no material!

She was now making Francis a frock out of part of a dress that had belonged to his mother, and out of another, a stuff one—she only carried two into the bush—she hoped to make Meyrick some kind of a suit, but bush-life wore out clothes very quickly, and the children now had to content themselves with a wardrobe a tenth part of the size it had been at Woodlands, for there was no money for clothes. This Nana knew.

But five shillings remained to them in the world, and no more could come until Jimmy sold his coffee or his wax.

But "de Lord will pervide," said trusting Jimmy to Nana, as he stowed his treasure away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A QUARREL.

"ISN'T Francis a good little baby, Nana?" Meyrick said one day, as his little brother sat quietly on the floor in the doorway, playing with an orange for a ball; "he doesn't ever grumble, and I don't think he often cries either."

Nana said that she thought he was very good, and so he really was. Half a banana to eat, or a pan in which to rattle a few grains of corn would keep him still for a long time together, as he sat on the kitchen floor whilst Nana cooked dinner.

He was beginning to walk very well now, and Meta was delighted to help him along. Then she would throw something on the ground beside him and try to teach him to pick it up and give it to her, and when she just helped him a little, he could do this very cleverly.

He liked to play with calabashes and he had several of these, for Thoney gathered many off the trees, and then cut them into mugs and baskets for the children.

Sometimes Meta was very good in helping to amuse her little brother, and Nana wanted help, for

there was never a moment in which she had time to be idle, but to-day Meta was neither amiable nor useful.

It was not rain that kept the children in this morning, but the hot sun. Nana could not let them be outside when there was no shade.

"I wish I'd something to do, Nana," Meta said presently, "just *any* thing, but there isn't *one* thing, not *one*," and she shook her little hands up and down in sheer despair.

"You've your doll," said Meyrick, "I haven't even that."

"A boy doesn't want a doll," answered Meta, putting on a sneer that very ill became her pretty little face.

"But I mean Pedro never brought me any toy from the fire."

"He only brought me one doll; I want some other things now."

"Oh! Meta, you bad, worthless child," said her brother, imitating the way the people upbraided one another, "when it was so kind of Pedro to think of your doll."

"Don't quarrel with Meta, Mars' Meyrick," said Nana, looking up.

"I'm not worthless," answered the child pettishly.

How very much there is in the tone of voice in which a few words are spoken, and the look in the eyes of the child who speaks them!

"Well, if you are not, why don't you get something to do, like *me;* make a necklace for your doll with the Job's tears Thoney gave you the other day."

"I don't want to," said Meta.

"Why, look at me, I'm plaiting a whip, and when this is done I'm going to try to cut a calabash next if Jimmy will lend me his knife, and then I might make you a basket. Jimmy's taught me how to make lots of things."

"A whip's no use now," Meta replied, "because you haven't got Frisky any more, and I don't want a basket; you'd only make it badly."

"Oh but I like to have a whip," said Meyrick, taking no notice of Meta's last remark, "and it'll do when we play horses next time, and then you know I shall have made every bit of it myself."

"Not the stick."

"I *cut* that myself, nobody *makes* sticks; they grow of course."

"You shan't hit me when we play horses," answered Meta, determined to quarrel if Meyrick would only let her do so, "you couldn't beat me if you wanted to, for Nana wouldn't let you."

Meta was very provoking to-day, and Meyrick was just in the act of raising his whip to threaten his sister, not to strike her (he could not have done that), when Meta screamed, and Nana, who was just outside and had not heard all the quarrel, came in and took poor Meyrick's whip away.

"Oh! Nana," he called out, "don't you see I'm working at it and it isn't finished yet."

"You going to strike Meta with it?" said Nana.

"Not really to strike her," said Meyrick, "only to show her that I could if I wanted to, Meta's a bad girl," and as Meyrick spoke he looked very angrily

at his little sister, who he felt was a great deal to blame that his work was stopped.

How true it is that it takes two to make a quarrel! Both the children had provoked one another, and both had been provoked. Either might have put a stop to, instead of bringing about, this silly quarrel.

Meta was crying now. Her fits of ill-humour often ended in a flood of tears.

"I shan't make you a basket now," said Meyrick.

"You shall," replied Meta.

"Hush, Meta," said Nana, "or you no have guava to-day."

Meyrick was going to say that she did not deserve it, but he did not want to make her cry any more, so was silent now.

The little girl then went over to Nana, and burying her face in her dress, sobbed till her nurse sat down, took her upon her lap and comforted her.

It would have been kinder towards the naughty little child to give her a slight punishment, but Nana did not think so, and she hardly ever punished the children now that their parents were dead, she was so sorry for them, and often when they cried, and she remembered how much they had to cry for when they missed their home, their toys, their various occupations within doors and then ended by saying, "I want father," or "I want mother," Nana could only comfort them and humour their every whim.

Especially fond was she of Meta, who had clung to her Nana with a peculiar love ever since she was a baby, many months younger than Francis.

"May I go and look for Jimmy, Nana?" now

asked Meyrick, too proud to show how much he felt having his whip taken from him; "he's only just working his ground, Pedro, who's lying just outside, will take me to him?"

Nana gave the desired permission so long as Meyrick promised not to go too much in the sun, and then saying, "thank you," and snatching up his hat, and calling to the dog, the little boy ran off, Pedro soon leading the way.

They climbed the hill in front of the house, and Nana and Meta could watch them nearly all the way. They very soon found Jimmy, who was weeding his ground.

The little boy proved very useful in helping Jimmy at this work, and before he had plucked out one weed, he had forgotten all about his late grievance, but when his work was over he remembered it again, and asked Jimmy if he couldn't just give him a little something to take in to Meta as they had had a little quarrel about something and he wanted to make it up with her.

Jimmy told him that he could have what he wanted, and then Meyrick chose a ripe ear of Indian corn, which he knew his sister liked very much indeed when it was roasted.

Before they had worked long Jimmy promised Meyrick to take them for a walk in the afternoon.

Till now he had feared to take them far, in case they should be seen, but he and Thoney met so few people when they went about, and no one just near the Wild Cane river, that for once he hoped no harm

would come of giving the children the treat of a long walk.

"Where's Thoney?" asked Meyrick, as he worked on vigorously.

Jimmy told the child that he was weeding a little higher up, so they called out to him and he answered but they could not see him at all through the bush.

Pedro had already been up to see Thoney. He could clamber very quickly, through bush-paths.

"You know, Jimmy," Meyrick then said, "I think we'd better be a little quick as Nana said when I came out that she had put dinner on; I suppose she means the yams were on, for I don't think all of it was because I think I guess what's for dinner to-day, shall I tell you—why the ring-tails you shot yesterday when you went out with your gun, and then I think there's a little rice and some stewed guava too, because Nana said something to Meta about guavas. That will be a nice dinner, won't it?"

Meyrick was too generous a little boy to tell Jimmy what Nana had said about the guavas; he never told tales.

"Us soon done, Mars' Meyrick," said Jimmy, "now you help so good," and the two worked so very industriously that the time passed very quickly, and they seemed, Meyrick said, only to have taken a few minutes to weed all that Jimmy wanted to do that day.

They then called out to Thoney that they were going in to dinner and started for home, Meyrick in his favourite place, perched on Jimmy's shoulder, spurring him on with his heels. Meta, from the

cottage, watched them coming and told Nana that they would be in directly. Nana was quite ready for them, for the three labourers had hardly finished washing their hands and faces for dinner, before it was on the table.

And Meyrick was quite right about what there was for dinner, even to the stewed guavas. The children had fared rather badly one or two days lately, as provisions were getting very scarce at "The Retreat," but Jimmy and Thoney generally tried to have something or other for them which they thought they would like.

Meta was very pleased to have the corn her brother brought her, and she let him kiss her and accepted his assurances of being sorry for what he had said and done to her, but she did not tell him, in return, that she was sorry for the really greater share she had had in the quarrel.

Meta very, very seldom owned to having done wrong, or said that she was sorry for her conduct.

This was such a pity!

CHAPTER XXXII.

BY THE WILD CANE RIVER.

"JIMMY, won't you let the walk this afternoon be to take us to the Wild Cane river to see you fish?" Meyrick asked during dinner; 'we should like that so much, and Nana and Francis could come too. I'm sure Francis would like it, because he does notice now. Oh, Jimmy, do, please do say 'yes.'"

The man hesitated. This was where he had thought of taking the children, but it now seemed very venturesome, though perhaps, he thought, he might be over anxious about them, for neither he nor Thoney had yet met anybody whilst fishing, and one or the other went to fish whenever he could spare the time. Meta too pleaded so very hard.

"Perhaps," the little boy went on, "the fish-pot that Thoney set for jongers (fresh water prawns) is full and we could bring it home. Oh, do say yes, Jimmy."

The man gave in, and as soon as the dinner was all cleared away, the children were made ready to start. Nana was very careful of them, and took a little cloak for each to put on when returning. They needed only their hats to go in, but the dew might fall before they reached home again.

How Pedro barked with delight when he saw

Jimmy bring his gun with him. He knew then that the man thought he might come upon a hog.

This fishing-expedition was a great treat to the children. They had long wanted to see how Thoney caught the jongers he every now and then brought them in for breakfast, and Meyrick was delighted at the thought of watching Jimmy catch other fish also. The men took two lines and hooks with them, the fishing-rods would consist, as do so many fishing-rods of the natives of Jamaica, of wild canes which they would cut down by the river-side.

Thoney carried a basket in which he hoped to take home some fish.

The narrow path leading from the house to the river was very steep, but the children were accustomed to climbing steep paths, and holding Thoney's hand, Meta half jumped, half ran down the hill.

When they reached their destination the fish-pot was nearly full of jongers, and a few mountain-mullet were also in it.

Meta clapped her hands with joy as she saw them and told Francis to look.

Meta was very fond of jongers, and the children, who knew now that they had to be satisfied with any food that could be procured for them without money, seemed rather to enjoy foraging for it.

The fish-pot was a very large bamboo split into eight pieces, and wattled into the shape of an out-of-the-way large strawberry pottle. It was fastened with stones against the current, and the water and fish poured into it together, but because the pot was pointed at the end, the fish could not turn round

again to get out, when once they were in the pot, and so were caught.

As soon as the men had made their rods, Nana and the children sat down upon large stones beside the river.

Meyrick and Meta were very quiet for fear of disturbing the fish which they could see so plainly through the clear water coming nearer and nearer to the bait, but little Francis could not be depended upon, and generally called out at the wrong time, so Nana took him to another stone, at a little distance from his brother and sister.

In the course of three quarters of an hour the men, between them, had caught half a dozen mullet. Meta hid her eyes just as the fish came up because she was so sorry for them, but they died directly and then she could look. Suddenly they heard a splash in the water, and at the same moment they saw Pedro crossing to the other side.

"See there, Jimmy," whispered Meyrick, "what's that Pedro's after?"

"Hi, dat good," said Jimmy, "why Mars' Meyrick him wild hog, don't 'peak," and before the little boy had time to do so, the fishing-tackles were hung upon a wild Tamarind-tree growing near; Jimmy had grasped his gun, both men had tucked up their trousers and were crossing the river. The hog, startled by the dog, had run along the opposite bank, but Pedro pinned him, and held him by the ear until Jimmy was near enough to take aim. Jimmy was a very good shot; and as he levelled and fired, the hog fell dead.

The children followed along their side of the bank to see how the chase would end.

At first Meta said it was very cruel to hurt the poor pig, but when Meyrick explained to her that no one liked to hurt a pig, but that she should never eat pork if she called it cruel to kill pigs, and that it wasn't a bit more cruel than killing *oxes*, she was a little assured. Bush life was sadly causing the little boy to forget his grammar.

Jimmy was never guilty of wilful cruelty. In this he was an exception to very, very many, alas! of his countrymen; he never allowed any creature that he killed for food to suffer one moment longer than was needful.

Whilst he was re-loading his gun, and Thoney was holding Pedro away from the hog, and Nana was watching the two men's proceedings, Meyrick and Meta heard a slight rustling in the bush behind them, and as they looked round, a black man, also carrying a gun, stood before them.

They had never seen him before.

"Hi! Buckra," he said, addressing Meyrick, "wha for you here? I no hear dat Buckra live by Wild Cane river."

The children did not speak, but Meyrick threw his arm round Meta, who now clung to him, to protect her.

"Whose Buckra pick'ninnies you, Sar?" he then asked, fixing a steadfast gaze on the patched clothes of the pretty boy; "what your name?"

Meyrick was too wise to answer, for he had often heard Jimmy say that if they were seen by anybody

"Jimmy looked up, and seeing a strange man with Nana and the children, he followed Pedro."—p. 189

they might be taken away from "The Retreat," and here they were now learning to be really happy.

Feeling much more frightened than the brave little fellow would appear, he caught hold of Meta's hand, and led her towards Nana, the man following at their side, muttering.

"Buckra pick'ninnies by Wild Cane river, are no Daddy an Marma here too? I never hear peak of Buckra Great House in dese parts."

Meyrick then called Nana as loudly as in his fear he could say the word, whilst Meta clung to him tighter and tighter.

The next moment Nana looked round although she had not heard Meyrick's voice, and to her great horror, and surprise, saw the two little ones coming towards her with a man pursuing them, or rather walking at their side.

She went to meet them.

"Hi! a third pick'ninny!" the man said as he looked at Francis. "I never knew Great House dis side river. Nana, where you all come from?"

By now Pedro, who meanwhile had heard and seen nothing but the work in which he, Jimmy and Thoney had been engaged, began to bark loudly, and ran towards the fording to cross the river.

Jimmy looked up and seeing a strange man with Nana and the children, he followed Pedro, and left Thoney to see to, and bring the hog.

"If you won't take us away," said Meyrick, who now seemed to find his voice, "I won't let my dog hurt you;" but this man, like most of his race was terribly afraid of a large dog, and without waiting

for Nana's answer or for Meyrick's promised protection, laying down his gun, he turned into the bush at the back, and before they knew what he was about, he had climbed up a tree, whilst Pedro who had arrived on the spot, stood below it, barking furiously.

Frightened as Meyrick and Meta were, they could not help laughing at the funny feat of the man who had frightened them, but Jimmy, in spite of his good day's work, killing a hog and catching so many fish towards the support of his large household, looked anything but inclined to laugh when he stepped out of the river and took Meyrick and Meta, who ran to him, each by a hand.

He thought of little Syd's strange disappearance and wondered if this man had anything to do with that, and if he had now come to try to carry off one of the other children.

He grasped his gun. That man in the tree seemed none of the bravest and Jimmy said to himself, as long as he lived, and his hand could load, and fire a gun, neither that man, nor any other, far braver than him, should touch, or harm, one of these little ones he had undertaken to protect.

But before he fixed on any course of action to pursue, he thought he had better hear what the man had to say for himself. So, telling Pedro to be quiet, he called to him to come down from the tree, assuring the man that the dog would touch nobody when commanded not to do so.

But it was some little time before he would quite trust Pedro, and Jimmy had to hold the dog very

tightly before the man would at last leave his elevated position.

"Him big," Jimmy said, "but him no bite when dem say 'no bite.'"

Pedro was much too well trained to attack anybody when told not to do so, but had he been with the children when the man frightened them, the latter would not have escaped into the tree unhurt. Jimmy unloaded his supposed adversary's gun before he came down from his place of safety and put his own out of reach of the children, as he had reloaded it.

Then he was quite ready to confront the man, for at any moment he could let Pedro loose upon him, should it be necessary for him to do so.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"PRINCE ALFRED" BOYDEN.

THE man's account of himself, given in his own fashion, amounted to this.

By trade he was a carpenter and had had, at one time, the carpentering work of a large property which during the year amounted to a good deal. In addition to this he had a large piece of ground of his own, and lately losing all the property work he had thought that he would give more time to cultivating his ground and had therefore built a little house, for that purpose, in the midst of it.

Here he still carried on the carpenter's trade when it suited him, but realized far more by the produce of his land than by that work. Like so many of his neighbours he was a coffee-planter in a small way; he grew his own canes, squeezed them, and boiled their juice into sugar, he grew also yams, jongo peas, sweet potatoes and several other vegetables, besides a good deal of fruit, and when he wanted a dinner of pork he went out wild-hog shooting.

This had been his occupation to-day when it brought him face to face with the children.

His dog had hurt his leg, so he had left him at home to get better.

Hearing Jimmy's gun fire off he had come out of the bush, thinking that the sight of a hog had made some one fire, and that where one hog was there might be more.

"Prince Alfred" Boyden was his name, and he was neither Roundhead nor Royalist, for he had taken no part whatever in the recent rebellion.

He had a wife and four children who were at their home, not three miles away from here.

Having told Jimmy so much of his history, "Prince Alfred" Boyden asked for a return of confidence from him. Who were the Buckra pick'ninnies?

Jimmy hesitated for a few minutes, but then feeling as we all must when a secret we have told to no one has suddenly half transpired, that to a certain extent we are at the mercy of the possessor of our secret, he determined to make the best of a bad matter and told his new acquaintance how the rebels had caused the death of both parents of these little children, had burnt their home and driven them into the bush, how he and two other of his fellow servants, who had loved dearly their late master, mistress, and their little children had brought the latter here to take care of, and watch over for a time, till their friends might arrange what was to be done with them.

But Jimmy said that he wished to bide his time, and begged his new acquaintance to say nothing of what he had seen and heard to-day.

"Prince Alfred" promised to be silent about the matter.

Somehow one honest man does know another when he speaks to him, and as these were both honest men it was borne in upon them that they could trust one another.

It was much better for Jimmy to tell the man himself who the children were, than for him to be asking the question of anybody else, and he seemed determined to have his curiosity satisfied. He noticed how very fond the children seemed to be of their protector.

"Three pick'ninnies," the man muttered.

"And little Syd," chimed in Meyrick, who had an ugly habit, in common with many little children of his age, of speaking when he was not spoken to, and of listening most attentively to every word spoken by his elders, which was not always meant for him to hear.

Nana motioned to him to be silent, and the man's attention being called off by Thoney appearing with the hog, he did not notice the child's remark.

"Plendid pig," he said.

"Yes," answered Jimmy, promising to give him a leg of it for his supper.

Jimmy was wise as well as generous. He wanted to make quite sure that "Prince Alfred" Boyden would not mention farther than his own home what this day had taught him (he knew that it would, and must, "out" there), and a present of pork would go far to cement the promise he had made.

The man thanked Jimmy very much, and said he would be "truly glad" to have the leg.

Nana then saying that they must be quick home as

dew was beginning to fall, the man offered to go as far as their home with them and carry the hog.

Jimmy would much rather he did nothing of the kind, but feeling sure that knowing as much as he did, the man would find out where they all lived, if he chose to do so, as soon even as to-morrow morning, he let him have his way, and they all left the banks of the Wild Cane river in company.

Jimmy carried Meta and the fishing tackles, for the little girl seemed tired and still frightened, Thoney the gun and basket of fish, and "Prince Alfred" followed with the hog, waiting outside the little house, when they arrived at it, for Jimmy to cut off, and give him, his promised leg for supper.

Breakfast at twelve o'clock and supper at six or seven, were "Prince Alfred's" principal meals as they were those of most of his class.

The children enjoyed their tea very much after their long walk, for which Nana fried them a little mullet and also gave them some jongers.

Meta said the mullet's big roe was the best part of all of it.

Before Bible reading that night Jimmy told Meyrick that he should not have said anything about little Sydney to the man to-day, and that he must not say again there was little Syd too, as he was dead now, and Meyrick would get Jimmy and Nana into great trouble perhaps if be talked about him.

The little boy did not see how this could be, but he thought Jimmy must know, and made up his mind to try not to talk of little Syddy again, although

he could not understand how he could be dead when he hadn't had a burial!

After Bible reading, and that night it was from the beautiful fifteenth chapter of St. John, where the command to love one another is twice given, Meyrick kissed his little sister and said, "I did take care of you at the river to-day, didn't I, Meta, when that man came? but I'm very sorry I did not take care of you better when I was making my whip. Are you sorry too? I didn't mean to whip you, you know," he whispered.

Meyrick felt that he had been a great coward even to raise his whip to his little sister, although he had really never meant to hit her with it, and therefore he was ashamed of himself; but though Meta now threw her arms round Meyrick's neck too, and kissed and loved him very much, she still did not say that *she* was sorry.

There was a wonderfully stubborn pride in this little girl's heart that must have caused sorrow to the Saviour whose words they had just been reading, for He could read their hearts much better even than they could read His holy book.

After the children were in bed that night Jimmy and Thoney made a large fire in the kitchen and half cooked the hog to prevent its turning bad by morning.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LITTLE SYD'S NEW HOME.

LITTE Sydney Cleveland's arrival in Nannêe Town caused great excitement in that valley, where few people really lived.

The news that a Buckra pick'ninney had been found by Sergeant Briscoe and carried to his home, spread like wild-fire throughout the valley, and every inhabitant of Nannêe Town soon turned out of his, or her, home to run to Sergeant Briscoe's to see the child who was then in the arms of Jane Briscoe, the sergeant's wife. Their three children, Rebecca, who was five years old, Theophilus, who was four, and a baby girl, Ada, who was fourteen months, were all clustering round him.

But poor Sydney did not seem to like at all the kind welcome which so many wished to extend to him, and the little fellow cried piteously as over and over again he looked all about to try and find his Nana.

Jane Briscoe was very good to him and at once prepared him some nice arrowroot which she gave him in his bottle.

He took it so eagerly that she knew he liked this, and arrowroot became for a time his usual food when

she could procure it for him, but little Mar'sa was not dainty and before long fell into the Maroons' mode of living, and as he grew a little older ate with Ada anything she had to eat. Sydney very soon let the children play with, and amuse, him and showed also that he liked to be amused.

The Maroons named the child "Little Mar'sa" because when Sergeant Briscoe brought him home and said "isn't he a bonny little Marsa'?" Theophilus, with whom he first made friends, called him "Little Mar'sa" and every one else followed his example.

When the first evening came the little English boy was put to bed with the other children, his bed consisting of a mat of plantain leaves woven together on which he lay, with a blanket thrown over him.

The Maroons used these mats very much for beds, and as the leaves with which they were made were easily procured, so soon as one bed was at all soiled, it was replaced by a new one.

Several of these mats were in the same room. The house of Sergeant and Jane Briscoe was built much in the same style as Jimmy's. It also consisted of two rooms and the kitchen was outside.

The different houses in this Nannêe Town settlement were not far from one another, but in many instances they were hidden behind the boulders, or large stones, that had rolled down the rocks. These houses were never built where the boulders were expected to fall, the nearest boulder to a house being usually at a distance of one hundred yards from it.

Little Mar'sa gave Jane Briscoe plenty of extra

work to do for him at first, but the bad habit of which she first broke him was waking up of a night to be fed.

She did not seem at all to mind the trouble given to her by this little fellow, but often wondered whence the pretty, well-dressed child had come. The morning after the child's arrival she put away very carefully his worked frock, and laying aside all superfluous, or unnecessary clothing, dressed him like her own children, in a little shirt.

Washing, needle-work, cooking, working in the fields, leading mules backwards and forwards to market, seeing to her children, was all work that fell to the lot of Jane Briscoe, and yet she found plenty of time for her extra charge, and he soon became so fond of her because she was so good to him, that she quite filled the place in the baby's heart which his own Nana had filled before, and the latter was of course entirely forgotten.

At Syd's age, aye and when children are a good deal older than little Syd, they have no memories for things or people beyond a few days of their existence for them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MAROON OCCUPATION.

AT St. Thomas, another of the West India Islands, in the Caribbean sea, the sailors tell you that, unless for a change they are visited by a hurricane, one day tells another.

One day told another pretty well at Nannée Town, therefore if I describe to you the usual, every day, life of the Maroons amongst whom little Syd, or as we must now call him, little Mar'sa, now dwelt and of his life in their midst, it will be enough for the present.

In Nannée Town there was a sort of understanding amongst the Maroons that a poor neighbour should be helped by one better off than himself, and if one of their number wanted anything possessed by his neighbour but not by himself, he was very often supplied with what he required.

One inhabitant of Nannée town had a cow, and as Sergeant Briscoe had none, the former often sent milk for the Buckra child.

In return for this kindness Sergeant Briscoe lent his neighbour his mule when he was not using it himself to go to Port Antonio, the capital of Portland,

in which county Nannêe Town was situated, when he had to take things to, or fetch them from, market.

The few cows and mules that were kept by the inhabitants of Nannêe Town pastured all about the hills.

The chief occupation of the Maroons was hunting, to which they went out together in numbers, shooting hogs or conies (which are a kind of wild rabbit, rather larger than a rat), ring-tails, pigeons, tame parrots, anything they could kill, and sometimes they would carry home these dainties for their own food and nourishment.

Tame pigs the Maroons sold amongst one another, but the wild hog, which after preparation they called jerked hog, they sold largely to strangers.

When they killed the pig they cut it into the shape of a flitch of bacon. The bones they took out and broiled over a slow fire of aromatic herbs and the wood of the pimento and nutmeg trees, to give the dish a high flavour. They then packed the meat in palm leaves and walked about the island selling it, carrying it hung upon their backs like a military knapsack, a strap which was passed round their foreheads being fastened to it to make the load somewhat easier to carry.

This jerked hog is a much appreciated delicacy.

Sometimes the Maroons themselves ate only vegetables for dinner, such as yam, plantain, or breadfruit, sometimes they had salt or fresh fish with the vegetables, and occasionally anything that they had been fortunate enough to shoot.

As little Marsa' grew older, choice little bits of

everything were given to him, the Briscoe children having, for him, to go without them.

Everybody seemed to unite to spoil the little fellow, and it soon became a natural state of things to him to be spoilt.

The Maroons had regularly adopted the child.

They could hear nowhere of a white baby having been lost, so they concluded that little Mar'sa's parents had been killed before he had been stolen by the rebels, and they agreed to keep him and do the best they could for him.

Theophilus was very fond of little Mar'sa and as he grew older held his hand and taught him to walk.

The little Maroon boy was very forward for his age, and often went with his father to see him catch fish.

The way a Maroon fished was to dive into caves in the rivers and then catch the fish as they tried to hide themselves in the rocks. When under the water he felt for them, and generally came up with one in each hand and another in his mouth.

Theophilus liked to see his father re-appear thus laden.

The fish the Maroons caught most usually were mountain mullet and stone bass.

If they did not wish to dive they set fish-pots and Theophilus helped at this.

The Maroons spoke a broken English very similar to that spoken by Jimmy and Thoney. Nannêe Town was so much shut in from every other place that the Maroon children only played with one another.

The people had a very vague belief in God, so vague that they did not know what they believed, and taught their children no religion.

There was a school in Portland appointed by the Church of England to be the school for Maroon, and other, children in the district, of which a native catechist was the master, who also on Sundays held a Church of England service in the neighbourhood, but as the school was a long way off, and to get to it the Rio Grande River had to be crossed, the little Briscoes were all too young to attend.

Both Maroon men and women worked in the field, not by the day as a rule, but by the job, this job often consisting of cutting down forests to make building spaces.

Little Mar'sa grew quickly, learnt very soon to crawl, and then to walk about after the other children, who were all very fond of him. Like them he wore a hat of plaited palm without any trimming, and many a time would they take him for a great treat, outside the house to play about with them in mud and dust.

At other times Mrs. Briscoe would carry him down to the River when she went to wash in it, and here he would sit quite contentedly under a bush, cooing to himself and talking to lizards or little birds, often the while biting a pumpkin.

He had become quite happy and contented, poor little fellow!

The Maroon men were from time to time put through a military drill.

When the drilling took place little Mar'sa sat and

watched it, and nothing kept him quiet as long as did this.

It looked so strange to see one solitary white baby in the midst of a whole settlement of black-people, but little Mar'sa was too young as yet to recognize any such distinction, or to question who he was or from whence he had come, as no doubt he would later when he found that he was different in appearance to all his companions.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

COTTAGE FRIENDS.

LESS and less did the little Clevelands mourn over their terrible loss, less and less often did they grieve for their loving parents, as more and more they grew accustomed to their present mode of living; but this was not to be wondered at, for if time stanches, and even heals, wounds that rankle very sorely in the hearts of grown up people, as it surely often does, how much easier must it be for time, and a short time also, to heal the wounds of little hearts, that open so readily to take in and welcome the most trivial surprises as great joys, coming as they do, thank God, again and again, to fill the room that sorrow has occupied for a small space of time.

A sugar-plum is a very small child's Paradise: how when many different kinds of the choicest sugar-plums are so often showered into children's laps, can they harbour, however deep it may have been, a lasting sorrow, and thank God again that it is so, that childhood's joys outnumber, by a large degree, both their little and their great troubles.

Meyrick and Meta were learning to be very happy in Jimmy's home, and they were soon very glad to

have made the acquaintance of "Prince Alfred" Boyden at the Wild Cane river, on that fishing-expedition afternoon, for he became very kind to them, and he had little children with whom Nana allowed them to play.

The very sight of *any* child to Meyrick and Meta, after being shut off from seeing one for so very long a time, was a great treat to them, and when, two days after they had been surprised and frightened by "Prince Alfred," his little girl was seen standing outside Jimmy's house, they ran to the door to welcome her.

Susie Boyden looked to be eight or nine years old. She wore a neat print frock that was tied up with a handkerchief beneath her waist, and hung barely to her knees. Her feet and legs were quite bare, and a very pretty red and yellow turban was fastened round her head, on which she carried a basket, conaining three eggs and a large, ripe grenadilla, that her father had sent as a present to the Buckra pick'ninnies.

It was very kind of him to think of sending these presents, and the children liked them very much, but they were far more pleased to see the child herself, unfit playmate as she may seem to us to be for them.

"You live near?" asked Meyrick.

"Yes," said Susie.

"You have brothers and sisters? or are you one alone?"

"Two brothers," was the answer.

"How old are you?" asked Meta.

The child did not answer.

"How much year you have?" explained Meyrick.

She shook her head for she did not know how old

she was; few Jamaica black children can tell their ages.

"Your brothers more big or more small dan you?" asked Meyrick.

"One more big and one follow me," she answered.

"May they come to see us, Jimmy?" the little boy asked; "I should like to see them."

Jimmy said that they might, and that very afternoon they came, Susie returning with them.

They were shy of the white children at first, and did not seem to know how to behave towards them, but they soon made friends with them, when they saw that they might do so, and then all played in the bush together.

Even Francis seemed glad to see new children's faces, and crawling to Susie stood up by her, holding on to her frock.

He was getting quite strong on his feet now, and made several little sounds that Meta interpreted as words.

He generally wore a little frock and shirt. He was the best off for clothes, for just now if it were necessary he could wear some of little Sydney's, but Nana had put all these away, treasuring them up in case the little fellow returned home again to wear them himself.

Somehow she could not give up all hope of seeing that child once more, indeed she clung to this hope and, acting in accordance with it, she would sometimes leave Thoney to watch the children and wander away by herself, first in one, then in another direction, hoping as she went along to meet some-

body in whose arms she might detect the child, vague and unlikely to be realized as was this dream of hers. Of course after each errand that proved fruitless she returned to "The Retreat," tired and terribly disappointed.

Thomas and Henry Boyden were ingenious boys, and amused Meyrick very much that afternoon, by showing him how to make several little useful things. Henry cut a needle-case out of a bamboo, and made a top to it. This he gave to Meta in which to keep some pins for her doll.

Thomas, out of another piece of bamboo, made a musical instrument, on which he taught Meyrick how to play music.

Then they made some orange-tops or, as they called them, gigs. These consisted of little green oranges, in which they cut a small hole and fixed a stick to act as handle. These tops spun very well.

They told the English children that their father made all sorts of wooden things, and that if they came to see him one day p'raps he'd make them some.

"You've got father and mother haven't you?" asked Meta.

"Yes," answered the boys.

"We none," said Meta.

"Those horrid, horrid people killed father," Meyrick then said; "of course I mean the rebels, but I suppose you didn't know any of them; they killed father, and they wanted to kill us, and Jimmy, and Nana, and Thoney, and it was their fault mother died, did they want to kill you too?"

"But Jimmy said we weren't to talk about it, so p'raps we'd better not, but we haven't any father or mother now and no house, only Jimmy's, but we had a beauty once, you know what like; it was Woodlands, and we had all sorts of toys, you might have seen my toy horse if we'd got Woodlands now, but the rebels burnt it down. It wasn't a bit like here; you saw Buckra houses didn't you before the rebels killed people; it was one of them!"

Meyrick looked very indignant all the time he was speaking. Nobody had told him that he must try to forgive even the rebels, and the little boy felt terribly angry whenever he thought of them.

Changing his tone and putting his arm round Meta, Meyrick drew her lovingly towards him and said rather proudly to the elder of the two boys—

"And I've got to take care of my little sister, you know, to mind her well, and love her, for true; father and mother told me to. Have you got to take care of Susie; and I do mind you, Meta, don't I?" he asked, all in the same breath, without allowing any of his four listeners to get in a word.

Meta said "Yes," and then all the children went indoors to eat some bananas and Johnnie cakes before the little Boydens went home.

The latter liked the Johnnie cakes very much.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A MAGISTRATE VISITS "THE RETREAT."

A DAY or two later Jimmy took Meyrick and Meta to spend an afternoon with the Boydens at their house. This was such a thorough change for them that it was a great treat, and when they went home again they carried away with them many presents that had been given to them, basket calabashes with handles, calabash drinking cups, calabashes made into bowls with covers, but what delighted Meyrick most of all was Henry promising to teach him how to carve calabashes himself, and also how to make cocoanut-shells into baskets.

Old "Mother Boyden," the man Boyden's mother, was very much taken with the children, and asked them all kinds of questions, but Meta, as usual, spoke very much, and Meyrick was careful to say nothing more than Jimmy would have liked him to say.

She was a wonderful old woman of 66, who spent four days of the working week picking and sorting coffee, and the other two seated on the floor, as she was to-day, doing needlework.

Meyrick liked Henry and Thomas' grandmother very much, and when he wished her "good-bye" he

said to her, "I'll come and see you again soon, Mother Boyden, if you want us to."

Almost every other day after this some present or other was sent to "The Retreat" for the children; one day a pine-apple arrived, another time a sugar cane, and once in a way there would be a fowl specially for Miss Meta's dinner, but Meyrick said that much the best presents were two little wooden stools, that Boyden had made himself, for him and his sister.

Meyrick and Meta now spent very many hours each day in the bush, but though they liked this life, still Meyrick could not forget his favourite books, and when he had once or twice tried to teach Meta to read out of Jimmy's reading book he longed more and more for one of his many interesting reading and picture books, of which he had once had so many and had been so fond.

Jimmy and Nana had been anxious about the food lately, for many days now the children only had vegetables for dinner, sometimes a little salt fish with them, but on the whole the children had fared wonderfully well, the Lord had indeed provided for them, according to Jimmy's prophecy, and as Jimmy's house was situated on a high mountain they looked, for children in Jamaica, now really well in health.

Meta, young and small though she was, was learning to do needlework quite neatly, and she, Nana, and Francis were often alone together whilst Meyrick was at work with the men and Pedro; for many a time there was the little girl to be seen sitting from choice, on her little stool beside Nana hemming.

Meta loved Nana more, and more, and Nana in return went on spoiling Meta.

Poor little girl! How much she would miss this spoiling, if ever she had to do without it, and how terribly it would in reality *spoil* her little character!

One day Meyrick and Meta were playing together outside Jimmy's little house, whilst Francis was asleep within it, the good man himself being busy with Nana in the kitchen, and Thoney having gone to his ground and taken Pedro with him, when the two children heard horses' hoofs.

They were very shabbily dressed, their clothes were now too old to admit of their being dressed in any other way, but their faces and hands had not long been washed, so these were very clean.

This was a good thing, for suddenly a gentleman rode up, stopped his horse, and dismounting at the door of "The Retreat," held out his hand for the children to shake. He knew Meta at once, Meyrick looked different, but in a moment he could see that it was the absence of the curls that made this difference.

The children, looking very shy, pulled back their hands, and then Meyrick catching hold of Meta, dragged her to Nana, who, with Jimmy, had run out of the kitchen.

Both Jimmy and Nana recognized the white gentleman. He was a magistrate, Mars' Hilliard, a neighbour planter of Mars' Cleveland's, one whom Jimmy had thought to have fallen with, so many others, a victim to the rebellion.

Mars' Hilliard had, in consequence of a rumour that had reached him with reference to the inmates

of "The Retreat," taken great pains and trouble to hunt out this negro abode.

It was no wonder that these children were at last missed and searched for till found, the wonder was that their faithful friends had been able to conceal them so long.

Meyrick and Meta, though poorly-clad and barefooted to-day when Mars' Hilliard surprised them, looked well cared for and in good health, and when they now clung to Jimmy and begged him to let nobody take them away, he could see what a true friend this man had been to the little ones, and when the next minute Francis awoke and Nana fetched him and he laughed as he loved her, Mars' Hilliard needed no one to tell him that it was out of pure love that these people had taken possession of, and concealed from their former friends, the little children of their late master and mistress.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MR. HILLIARD AND THE CHILDREN.

"WELL, little man," said the gentleman as he patted Meyrick on the shoulder and looked very sadly at him and his sister, "you do not mean to say that you have forgotten me?"

"Of course I haven't," answered Meyrick, "you are Mr. Hilliard, but didn't the rebels kill you then?"

"No, Meyrick, thank God, I escaped out of their clutches."

"But they killed my father," said the little boy—"did you ever know they killed my father? Jimmy and Thoney say they are bad, worthless, horrid rebels, and so they are."

"I am sorry to say I have heard all about it," said Mr. Hilliard, "it was a shameful thing."

"And did you hear about mother too?" asked Meta, now gaining courage herself to speak; "mother's gone away from us, too; Jimmy took her when we were in the cave."

"No, Meta," said Meyrick, "that's wrong, God took her first you know and then Jimmy helped—he did her burial."

"Yes, Jimmy helped," said Meta, "and we asked

him to take us too, but now we don't want to go, do we, Meyrick?"

"No, we like here now," answered the little boy; "but the seasons were wet at first, and then we couldn't get out and had nothing to do and we wanted father and mother all day long; but now we've each a bit of ground, and we grow all sorts of things on them ourselves; if we'd just some books and toys and might ride to church I don't think we should want anything more then, do you, Meta?"

"No," replied the little girl.

All this time Mr. Hilliard had been standing in Jimmy's garden. Now the man asked him if he would not go inside his house there to sit down and rest for a few minutes.

This the gentleman did and as Jimmy followed him, Nana whispered to the children to go and put on their shoes and socks.

Whilst they were thus engaged Mr. Hilliard asked Jimmy to tell him all that had occurred to the family since the 11th of October.

It was a painful story, and when Mars' Hilliard asked what had happened to the other twin (for every one in Blue Mountain Valley had known "young Missis Cleveland's little twins") and Jimmy said he was dead, he did not ask any more questions about him, for it did not seem a sad occurrence to Mr. Hilliard to hear that an orphan baby had been taken home, and he could make no trouble out of this. He could see that when Meyrick and Meta came back again Jimmy tried to change the conversation, and he was glad to do so, as these little ones had

seen so much of sorrow that he thought it was well to try to help them to forget what they could of it.

Nana and the men were wrong in not telling all the truth about poor little Sydney. Had they done so he might perhaps have been found, but once having said that he was dead they did not wish now to say otherwise, and as Jimmy and Thoney believed in their hearts, that the child was dead, they saw no good in telling the circumstances of his disappearance to any one. It is not right to speak half a truth, and these good people were certainly to blame in what they said about Sydney.

"Do you know that Woodlands is all burnt?" asked Meyrick, as he went up to Mr. Hilliard, who took him on to his knee. "Pedro fetched Jimmy to go and see it first—wasn't it good and clever of Pedro? and when they got there they found it burnt to pieces."

"Yes," put in Meta, "and then Pedro brought me my doll, wasn't it kind of Pedro? he did, didn't he Meyrick, and it was all dirty because he buried it," and Meta laughed.

"And Jimmy saved one box," said Meyrick, "but he couldn't save *that* more," and he snapped his little fingers as he spoke. "We've opened the box and there are all sorts of beautiful things in it that Nana says we're to have when we're bigger, but I've had one thing already, because Meta had her doll and Nana said I was to, and that's a silver pencil-case and penholder all in one. I write with it sometimes."

"Would you not like to live in a house like Woodlands again?" Mr. Hilliard asked kindly.

"If we could have father and mother again, and Jimmy and Thoney and Nana all there, and Frisky and the cow and everything like it was," answered Meyrick, "but we couldn't could we?"

"You cannot have your father and mother again in this world, dear little ones," said Mr. Hilliard, "but you could have everybody else, and plenty of books and toys."

"Would you like it, Meta?" asked her brother.

"I like here," she answered, going up to Nana and taking her hand, "because my gongo peas will soon be ready, and I want to dig my own yam heads, and the goat's here you know, and the kids, and all the fowls; I don't want to go away at all."

"I think I'd rather stay here too, thank you," said Meyrick, "because I've got to learn how to make calabashes all alone, and old Mother Boyden would be so sorry if I did not come and see her sometimes." Mr. Hilliard had not much more time to spare today, so he called Jimmy and Nana outside the little house to speak to them, telling the children that he would see them again presently.

He then briefly thanked very heartily both Nana and Jimmy, in the children's names, for all they had done for them and their parents before them, and then said that he and his wife would like these little ones to be brought at once to his home at Perivale, and remain there until their friends in England could be communicated with, as to what was to become of them. He said that, of course, Nana and

Jimmy must come also, and that if Thoney would like to become a property-servant at Perivale he could do so, and Mr. Hilliard would be glad to have him, and find him work.

The sooner the children were brought over the better, said their English friend, and he left it to Nana to fix an early day, giving her money to get them whatever they required.

She and Jimmy agreed to remove them in a week's time; she said she could not do so sooner, as she could not let Mars' Cleveland's children go shabby to a Buckra house, and she would have to make them black clothes after Jimmy bought the material, and this would take some little time. Thus it was arranged that on that day week Mars' Hilliard was to send up horses and a mule, to bring the children, Jimmy, Thoney, Nana and box the and bundles from "The Retreat" to Perivale, and Jimmy and Nana were totell the news to the children when the gentleman was gone.

"Did the rebels kill Mrs. Hilliard?" Meyrick asked as Mr. Hilliard called to him and Meta to come and wish him "good-bye."

"No, Meyrick" was the answer, "I am thankful to say we both escaped."

"I wish father had, too," said Meyrick; then he added quickly, drawing himself up to his full height as he spoke—"do you think I'm growing big? I want to be very big quickly to take good care of Meta. Father said I was to and so did mother?"

"You are bigger than when I saw you last, Mey-

rick, and you look much older without your curls."

"Am I bigger, too?" asked Meta.

"Yes," was the answer, and then Mr. Hilliard mounted his horse and rode off home again.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CHILDREN'S ENTREATY.

"BUT I mightn't have learnt how to make calabashes by then," said Meyrick, when Nana told him what Mr. Hilliard said was to happen in a week's time; "I must learn now how to make calabashes, and we don't want to go away from here at all, do we, Meta?"

"No," answered the little girl; who was learning to talk a very bad English "who mind my ground, Nana, when we gone?"

The nurse smiled, and said that Jimmy must see to that when he came up to attend to his own. He had now gone to Morant Bay to buy black material to make the children's clothes. When they were made Nana was going over there to buy their boots, hats and several other things; also a black dress for herself.

For the next few days Nana was very, very busy, stitching away from morning till night, but when the time came for the new clothes to be put on, Jimmy and Thoney said that the children all looked first-rate. Meyrick's suit fitted very well. When they were once settled at Perivale Nana promised to take

him to town to buy him another suit or two. This one was just to go in and to have to wear at once.

The last day to be spent at "The Retreat" arrived, the last Bible reading there came off. How very sad Nana and Jimmy felt they only knew. Fondly, dearly they loved these children, and it had been a source of great delight to them to work, and provide, for them.

Many an Annancy story Jimmy had told this week, many a sugar-cane had Thoney brought in from his ground, and now on the very last evening, as they sat round the table for their Bible reading in Jimmy's little home, that good man looked very sad and grave and solemn.

Meyrick clambered on to his knee.

"You unhappy, Jimmy?" the little boy asked when Meta had gone to bed.

He did not answer. He was thinking with what different feelings, under what various circumstances, had he read his Holy Bible since he had learnt to read it.

With what different feelings, perchance under what very various circumstances have many others read theirs, in joy, in sorrow, in want, in plenty, before and after separation from dear friends, before and after re-union, alone, in company, and the words of comfort have brought quite different messages at different times, to hearts laid open to receive them.

"You unhappy, Jimmy?" Meyrick asked again.

"Hi! Mars' Meyrick, Jimmy often dat, but us must tank God for send food for pick'ninnies in poor

Jimmy house so lang dem want it, an' tank God fe raise 'em up good Buckra friend. Ah, Mars' Meyrick, I wish I could a done more for you an' Miss Meta, an' mek you more happy while you here, but I no more fe do."

"You 've done ever so much, Jimmy," said the child, as his short stay at "The Retreat" looked back upon just as it was ending, seemed, oh! so bright and fair! "We've been very happy here, at least you know, Jimmy, what I mean. We should have been ever so happy if father and mother were here too, for you've been so good to us Jimmy, and we like here very much."

"Tank you, Mars' Meyrick."

"Will you promise me something, Jimmy?"

"What dat?"

"You won't let them take us away from you, will you, the soldiers, Mr. Hilliard, or anybody, and if they send us to England, you will come too, won't you?"

"If dem send me," said the man.

"They *must* send you, or I'll tell them that I won't go, and then Meta can't go either as I've to take care of her—of course she couldn't go without me. Oh, Jimmy do, do promise not to let them send us away from you," pleaded earnestly the little boy, who seemed now to have caught some of Jimmy's sadness, "it would be so dreadful," and as Meyrick spoke he began to cry.

"No, Mars' Meyrick," said the man who loved the little boy now sitting upon his knee better than his own life; "if dem send Mars' Meyrick an' Miss Meta England, me try fe go too."

"Oh thank you, Jimmy, and Nana must go also you know for Meta and baby."

It was now time for Meyrick to go to bed. Meta had been talking much in the same strain to Nana, but she would not give the promise that Jimmy had given.

She could not promise to leave Jamaica and go to England. If all the children had been there to set sail, yes, she would have gone anywhere with them, without a moment's hesitation; but with little Syd still lost, and with the hope of still finding him not extinguished in her heart, how could she leave the island in which he had been lost? No, she could not leave Jamaica even to go with her dear little Meta, for these words echoed and re-echoed in her ears, and she could never forget them, nor the face of the fond mother who spoke them. "Mind him well, Nana, his boy, his father's namesake."

CHAPTER XL.

LIFE CHANGES.

IF we take our lives to pieces as it were, and look back upon them as time goes on, even many of you young children who are reading, and I hope with some interest, the story of little Meyrick, Meta and "the twins," we shall most likely find them cut up and divided into many parts, some parts happy, some sad, some useful, some idle, as the case may be, some well spent, alas, many spent badly!

Meyrick and Meta have passed through several of these changes.

There was first their happy life at Woodlands, beginning with all play, ending with much play and a few lessons. Then came the terrible rebellion-day which saw their father die, and themselves and fond mother driven from pretty Woodlands to the bush, their short stay in the cave, their mother's death, their flight to Jimmy's house their abode in it, and now another life division has come, another change has passed into their little lives.

Three horses and a mule arrived over-night at "The Retreat," that the children might have a cool ride in the very early morning. Nana rode one horse and

carried Francis, Jimmy and Meta rode another, Meyrick the third, and Thoney and the boys, who had taken up the horses, followed leading first the mule laden with the trinket box, and one or two other things, then the kid and goats, and carrying the children's pet fowls (all Jimmy's had been killed and eaten) and the little present stools. Pedro ran on in front. "Prince Alfred" and his children came early to say "Goodbye," and followed some distance along the road, "Prince Alfred" leading Meyrick's pony over very steep and rugged places.

The children were once again to live in a Great House, and very curious they felt at last as they neared Perivale, to see once more, they said, what a Great House really looked like, as they had nearly forgotten.

It was not Woodlands, and father and mother were not there, but Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard were very kind, bade all a most hearty welcome, and made the little ones soon feel at home, and most liberally rewarded those who had spent their time, their strength, their means, in lately providing for them. Nana had quite enough to do again as nurse, and yet she wanted more, she wanted another baby to watch over! Jimmy worked in, or out of, doors as he required; Thoney became groom, but many a spare minute he snatched to come to the window to tell Mars' Meyrick and Miss Meta something about Pedro or the horses which he thought would interest them.

The children were soon taken by Jimmy and Thoney to see the ruins of Woodlands, and father's and mother's grave.

It was strange to see an empty space where the Great House had so lately stood; it was very sad to be told that under that mound lay buried both their parents; but the children liked to stand beside the mound, and often did they ask to be brought hither again. Meta, as she came along, would pick favourite little flowers of mother's, and when she arrived would stick them into the ground; whilst Meyrick begged leave to dig a plant-root from the garden to carry thither. Nana loved also very dearly to pay visits to that grave, and servants and children often journeyed here together.

It looked so odd to see the pastures and stable empty, the fowl-house gone, hardly anything as it had been; and when the children asked where the cow and mules and horses were, they were told that negroes had stolen them long ago.

One of the first things that Mr. Hilliard did after the children arrived at his house, was to report them, so that they might have the annuity due to them as children of the rebellion, children whose parents had perished in it. The next thing was to get the whole of the land-property of Woodlands from the hands of negroes who had divided it amongst themselves, and had already made small settlements upon it.

He then went to the Post-office to inquire if any letters had arrived from England, directed to Woodlands, and if so what had become of them.

He was told that some letters had come, but as no one claimed them they had been opened and returned to England.

Who were the writers of these letters? Two were

from the same person, one who signed herself "Mabel Irving." Both Mr. Hilliard and Nana knew that Mabel Irving was the name of Mrs. Cleveland's good aunt, and Nana knew also that it was she to whom young Mar'sa had said to his wife, "write" after he had been so fatally wounded.

Mr. Hilliard would have seen to all these matters sooner, but had only very lately returned to his property, he having been detained away from home because his wife had been taken ill some distance from it through the shock and fright which she had sustained during the rebellion, and since he came back he had been very busy.

Next mail he would write to Mrs. Irving to hear what she wished the children to do, and meanwhile, till the instructions came, they were to make themselves as happy, and as much at home, as they could at Perivale.

And they were happy there on the whole; Meta in naughty moods found many things to grumble at, as she would have found anywhere, but Meyrick was very well contented and soon became a general favourite.

Francis, who was now thirteen months old, walked well, and liked Meyrick and Meta, between them, to lead him along as they often did.

They had once more a nursery to play in, and Mr. Hilliard had procured several books for Meyrick, and toys for them all.

Indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard did everything that lay in their power to make the poor little children whom they had brought to their home as happy as they could.

CHAPTER XLI.

NANA'S HOLIDAYS.

WHEN instructions from Aunt Irving arrived, they were, as Jimmy and Nana had both expected, to this effect: the little ones were to be brought to England as soon as it was thought advisable by the friends of their late father and mother now resident in Jamaica to send them thither.

As it was now the month of January, and little children born in the tropics would feel very much an English winter if they arrived in England for the first time during the winter months, it was settled that they should remain in Jamaica until a packet in May which would bring them to England at a very good time of year.

Many people were anxious to have the children to spend part of the time that they were still to pass in Jamaica with them; there was no diffculty in finding them a home, or homes, for the months of February, March and April, but Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard would not allow them to stay anywhere but at Perivale, although they might spend the day with their different friends as often as was good for them, and these friends wished to have them.

Everybody was most kind and anxious to do

something to show love towards, and sympathy for, these little ones, whose terrible loss they deplored, but kindest of all were Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard, who were noted for their great goodness, and warm hospitality towards friends and neighbours, as are so many families abroad. Many friends, however, even these children missed, for many, many also had, with their parents, fallen victims to the horrible cruelty of the ruffian rebels.

Meyrick and Meta, who firmly believed that both Jimmy and Nana were going to England with them, now looked forward eagerly to the time of departure, to visit their parents' birth-place, that country of which they had heard so much both from people who had been there, and also from natives of Jamaica, who not having been there still called it home, and imagined it to be a most wonderful place.

Thoney had told them that there were no black people at all in England, and that there white people did the hard work. This seemed so strange, and Meyrick and Meta were quite longing now for the time to come when they would be taken to England and see all these things for themselves of which they now only heard.

They did not at all like, however, the idea of leaving Thoney behind, for they were very fond of the African boy who had been a good friend, servant, and playmate to them, but then Meyrick told him that when he was in England perhaps he would be able to have him over there too; he didn't know, but p'raps he might be able to get somebody to bring him to England to them; he'd see about it.

Life was made as happy as it could be for the little Clevelands whilst they remained in Jamaica, but somehow they seemed to miss father and mother more again now that they were back in a Great House, and had to be a little lady and gentleman once more, than they had missed them in their strange, new, free bush-life, where everything was "so quite different," as Meyrick said.

The little boy wanted to be at lessons again, but when kind Mrs Hilliard gave him books and taught him lessons he did not seem to like them without mother to teach him, and Meta wanted father and mother now, oh, so very much!

Francis was always with his Nana—Meta was with her a great deal, but not always, and somehow or other the little girl could not feel at home when she left the nursery, although Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard, who had no children of their own, indulged her very much.

Nana seemed so sad now, much sadder even than she had seemed before, and sometimes Meyrick and Meta found her crying, and they didn't think somehow, they said, that she was exactly crying for father and mother, for when they asked her she did not say.

Very often she would ask for part of a holiday, and then she would go out for several hours, always taking little Francis with her, from whom she could never bear to be separated. Poor little Meta would then cry to go with Nana also; but her nurse told her that she could not take two children, and she must be good till she came back.

Where Nana went no one knew.

Several times Mr. Hilliard lent her a horse for her expeditions, as she said before starting that she was going some distance and then, poor, persevering woman, she rode on and on, one day through one district and another through another, on a fruitless search for little Syd.

If she could only find him now, she thought, before the other children started, she could go with them and not be parted from those other three so very dear to her, but if she did not find little Syd she could not go to England, as she felt that she must still stay and hunt for the lost child, for his dead mother, her dead mistress' sake, whom she had loved so very truly, and when she returned from these long, fruitless wanderings and Meyrick and Meta ran into the porch of any room in which they chanced to be, to scream with joy at seeing her come back to them, and ask her a dozen questions, she wept as she kissed them because of her unsuccess and what she felt that it entailed upon her.

Many people called to see Mrs. Hilliard and the little children to whom she was giving a home, and then they almost always asked to see Nana. Indeed, if they wanted to see Francis, they could not do so without seeing his Nana also, for he would seldom be separated from her for a moment.

And then came the same old questioning as to the last hours of her master and mistress, and as to how long after them the other twin had lived.

No one was surprised to hear of Syddy's death.

Indeed most people wondered that either baby

had survived the hardships to which the children had been exposed.

Meyrick and Meta seemed almost to have forgotten their other twin baby brother, for they never spoke of him, and no one cared to speak before them of any of the sad circumstances of the rebellion, which were much better not brought back to their memories oftener than was necessary.

The children believed that Syddy was dead, because Jimmy and Nana said that he was, and it became a habit with these little ones not to speak of this little brother, as Jimmy and Nana had said that they might bring them into trouble by so doing, and thus they began themselves to forget him.

What a pity it was that Jimmy and Nana did not speak the truth now—that they felt they must adhere to what they had once said! but this is the evil of a first untruth, it seldom remains the only one, and had they but told Mr. Hilliard, or other friends, what had really taken place, these friends might perhaps have made inquiries that would have reached Maroon town and have led to the child's recovery.

It was wrong, it was silly of Nana and Jimmy, but they were only ignorant people, and how often do we act wrongly and make grave mistakes, without the provocation to do so that they had!

But Nana and Jimmy and Thoney had agreed before they came to Perivale to say that Sydney was dead, and nothing moved them from their purpose of revealing to no one their miserable secret.

Yet although Jimmy and Thoney believed firmly that he was dead, Nana could not believe it.

When she went out by the hour together, Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard thought that she had gone to see some of her friends before leaving the island, friends whom no doubt she had of late neglected because the children had occupied all her time and thoughts, and they trusted her too much to ask her any questions.

Sometimes she chose her holiday when Meyrick and Meta spent the day at some friend's house; every now and then they were invited where there were other little children, with whom they could play, and they enjoyed these days very much.

Jimmy would often take them and remain to bring them back; if they rode he led a little pony that was lent to Meta, or carried her on a horse. The children were both fond of riding.

Meyrick was learning to ride very bravely now, and he was so glad because Frisky had been found and brought back to him.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE YELLOW ROSE TREE.

"YOU disagreeable, worthless child," said Meyrick, "nothing pleases her, Thoney."

"Bad boy!" answered the little girl, "I tell Nana when she come back."

Nana and Francis were out, and these two were in the garden together at work on their own bits of ground that Mrs. Hilliard had given them, and Thoney was helping from time to time.

They had not been out long, for the sun had only just got to the back of a hill that threw shade over this side of the garden, and they were not allowed to work here until the shade came.

"What wrong, Mars' Meyrick?" asked Thoney.

"Why you see I've given Meta a bigger bit of ground than I've got myself, and now she isn't satisfied," said Meyrick, speaking as much with his little hands as with his tongue; "I don't know what she wants. Mrs. Hilliard didn't give her as much as I have, for I've put that bit on to hers, and now she grumbles, what is it you want Meta?"

"That bit more."

"Oh, Thoney, do you see what she's pointing to?

my yellow rose tree, and I pruned it all yesterday myself, and want to give Mrs. Hilliard the best rose off it to-night. I'll give you a piece of ground the other side, Meta," he continued.

She stamped her foot saying that she would have the piece she wanted and no other.

Meyrick refused to give it, and went on raking his bed and picking out his weeds.

Meta was so ill-tempered that she actually walked away to sulk.

"No give it, Mars' Meyrick," said, Thoney, "I plant Miss Meta 'noder yellow rose-tree.

"And she has one rose-tree already," said Meyrick, "only hers is red and mine is yellow, and she chose hers herself. Meta," the little boy called out, as he then ran up to his sister, "Thoney is going to plant you a yellow rose tree in your garden, won't that be nice, and you will let me keep mine, won't you?"

Meta walked towards the bed, but would not speak. When a sulky fit was upon her nothing but exactly her own way would give her satisfaction.

"Shall Thoney plant you the tree just there?" said Meyrick pointing to a vacant spot.

"No," she answered.

"Where us plant it, Miss Meta?" asked Thoney.

No place would suit her, and then Thoney had to go off and finish his work, so the children were left alone.

"Meta, don't be so stupid and disagreeable," said Meyrick, "what *do* you want I should like to know?"

"That," she answered, pointing to the whole piece of bed that the yellow rose tree covered.

"But it's mine and you can't have it," he answered. 'Wouldn't you like some other part of my garden? I might be able to spare you another part, perhaps."

"No," was the stubborn reply.

Meyrick felt very angry now.

He too had a temper of his own, but not a sulky one, and he was very forgiving.

"Then go indoors and have none," he said. "I won't play with you any more."

Meta walked to the verandah, and there sat down and cried.

Meanwhile Meyrick went on pruning his tree.

Presently he called to his sister.

She took no notice of him.

"Come here," he said, as he went up to Meta, and then led her to the tree, "you can have it; but you are a very, very selfish child, that's what I know."

Meta, delighted to get her own way, did not mind whether she were selfish or not, just said "thank you," and showed herself quite contented.

"I've pruned it all for you," said Meyrick, after a little, "and Meta, wouldn't you like just to give me the best rose off it to give to Mrs. Hilliard; I want to give it her so much at tea time."

Meta picked one which she handed to Meyrick, but it was not the best.

"That's the one I mean," said Meyrick, pointing to a lovely rose-bud.

Meta picked another, but still not the one of Meyrick's choosing.

"That's not it," he repeated, "and you pick it much

too short, there isn't half stalk enough. Let me pick the one I want myself, shall I?"

Meta did not say "Yes." What a strange little girl she was to be so selfish and wilful!

"I'm very sorry I've got to take care of you, Meta, I can tell you," said Meyrick, "and I would not do it if father and mother hadn't said it to me," and with eyes filling with tears he walked away.

Meta soon ran after him to bring him back to pick the rose he wanted off the tree himself, with a long stalk to it.

His example had won that from her, and after he had picked it and she let him kiss and thank her, she thought she had been very good to give Meyrick that beautiful rose off her tree. Poor little Meta!

Mrs. Hilliard was very pleased, when at tea time Meyrick presented her with his pretty rose. She would have been more pleased still with the child's gift had she known all that was connected with it, the little boy's struggle with himself to part with his rose-tree to Meta, when he so longed to keep it in order to give the best rose-bud himself to Mrs. Hilliard off his own tree, because she was very kind to him and loved roses better than any other flower.

CHAPTER XLIII.

NANA'S TEMPTATION.

JIMMY now spent a good deal of his time up at "The Retreat," settling his house and grounds before leaving Jamaica for England.

It was a real trial to him to leave his little home, but it would have been a far greater trial to let little Mars' Meyrick go away without him.

Jimmy had been given choice whether to stay behind or go to England, and he had for Mars' Meyrick's sake at once decided to go. Mrs. Irving had left everything for Mrs. Hilliard kindly to settle with reference to the children's departure, who had asked both Nana and Jimmy to accompany them, and she quite believed that both intended to do so.

Jimmy's difficulty was that he did not know how long he would be likely to remain in England, so he did not like to part with his house and ground; the house he agreed to shut up, the ground he rented to Thoney.

Nana could still not find courage to tell Mrs. Hilliard that she did not mean to go to England with the children, she had hardly courage to tell this to *herself*, so eagerly did she long to go with them, but

now only one month remained, and her final decision must be made, and told to Mrs. Hilliard, so that she could find another Nana for the children before it was too late.

Poor Nana! it was a very hard decision at which to arrive.

Most white or black women receiving still no tidings of the missing child, would have made up their minds that it was of no use to seek for him any longer, and would have settled to go with the other children to England, but not so Nana.

Mrs. Cleveland had taught her to pray as she had taught her little children, and when the inmates of the nursery were in bed that night Nana knelt down by Meta's crib and prayed to God to show her what to do and to help her to do it.

The next day she had decided, and told Mrs. Hilliard—who received the news with great surprise—that she was very sorry she could not go to England with the children.

Mrs. Hilliard could not believe that Nana meant what she said—Nana, who seemed to love those orphan children far better than she loved herself—and both she and her husband tried to move her from her purpose, but without avail, and then Mrs. Hilliard had to decide to seek for a new Nana, asking the good old one to help her make the choice.

"But what will Meta and baby do?" asked Mrs. Hilliard, "and even Meyrick, although he will have Jimmy, but what those other two will do on board, without parents, and without you, Nana, I cannot think. Ah, Nana, for their sakes, poor little things,

could you not just go with them to England and place them safely with their friends, even if you will not remain there with them?"

Nana thought for a moment; this, perhaps, would be the right thing for her to do, but no, she dare not trust herself. When once in England, the other side of the water, it might be she could not tear herself from the children to come back here, or she might think it would be useless to come, or she might just forfeit all she longed to win, by making the journey and losing time, so again she said "no."

It was then settled by the wish of both Mrs. Hilliard and herself that the children were not to be told of Nana's strange decision until they were nearly starting.

Two days before sailing the children stood, for the last time, beside "The Grave." Again little Meta, going along, had picked the favourite little flowers, again she stuck them in the ground with her little fingers, fondly imagining they would grow. All Meyrick's plants had taken root and were growing, because there had been no heavy rain to destroy them, and an over-shadowing tree sheltered the grave from a too hot sun. Many more roots he took to-day, which he planted for Meta and himself, and which Thoney promised the little boy that he would water. What seemed to bloom better than anything else was a very beautiful grass. Meyrick and Meta were so very glad, poor children, to see their flower growing so nicely.

It was evening of the same day, the new Nan was in the house, the children had learnt their fat

but none of them would call that strange woman "Nana," nor would they go near to her.

The old Nana was packing boxes, the children all clustering round her, little Francis clambering on to her back.

Meta had been crying for some time, and Meyrick had been trying to comfort her, although he was almost as unhappy as she was.

Nana not going to England with the children had changed everything, they didn't like England now, they did not want to go to it, they begged to be allowed to stay here too.

"Oh Nana, you don't, you can't love us," sobbed Meta, as she sat on her nurse's lap cuddling her, "if you are going to leave us."

"Nana love you well, Meta, and you too Mars' Meyrick, and little Francis, but—"

"But what, Nana?" asked Meyrick. "You haven't anybody that loves you more than we do, have you, to take you from us? Oh, Nana, do come."

"Nana come some day," she replied, "but p'raps Meta forget Nana by then."

"Oh, Nana," said the little girl, "I could never forget you, I love you too well, but will you come for true?"

"I hope come," was the answer.

"That *is* a good thing," said Meyrick, heaving a little sigh of relief; "but what a pity you can't come *with* us because of Francis and *all*."

She was just thinking that all were not there, when Meta asked when she would come, and if it would be next week.

"Stupid child," said Meyrick, "why we shan't be

there next week ourselves, nor the week after, we shall be nineteen whole days on the ship going from here to England."

Nana lingered long over putting the children to bed that night, the last to be spent at Perivale, for the next was to be spent in Kingston, and that would be the last, the very *last*, night in Jamaica—what a sad word those four little letters sometimes spell—what sadness they have spelt to some of us—l-a-s-t, what sadness they spelt that night to Nana!

She felt so sad that she was almost tempted to change her mind then and go to-morrow with these little ones, unprepared as she was for a sudden departure, but she was still brave and strong enough to remain behind.

Would she ever see them again she wondered? She did not know, but she must risk that, for as she clasped Francis in a tight embrace she saw another little baby-face, smaller than his, for though it was as large now, she had not seen it grow as she had seen that of his twin-brother; and distinctly she heard their mother speak to her to-night, and the words she said were—"Nana, you and Jimmy will take care of my poor children, won't you?" yes, "you and Jimmy," but yet louder re-echoed these words—

"Take care of *him*, Nana, *his* boy, his father's little namesake"—and the temptation to go from the task she had set herself to fulfil had left her once more.

CHAPTER XLIV.

KINGSTON WHARF.

"GOOD-BYE, Nana, oh, good, good-bye."

A little girl was speaking these words—you know well who she was, but not to her Nana was she now saying them, but really to herself, for her Nana was standing on Kingston Wharf, and she was standing as near to the edge of a great steamer carrying her quickly away, as she could get, crying very bitterly whilst she spoke.

"Good-bye, oh, good-bye, Nana," the little girl repeated.

It was Wednesday. On Tuesday night the little Clevelands had slept at an hotel in Kingston, Mr. Hilliard, old Nana, new Nana, Jimmy, and Thoney having all brought them hither from Blue Mountain Valley, so as to be able to go on board the steamer, that was to take them to England, very early the next morning.

From eight till nine o'clock that morning had Meta clung to her Nana, never losing hold of her for one moment, but at last nine o'clock came, and with it the time for parting, and this time waits for nobody.

Nana had been very busy on board that morning, selecting cabins, seeing the cabin boxes carried down, changing the children's good hats, in which they had gone on board, for shabbier ones that would do well for on deck, and Meta had been close beside Nana up to the last moment. The confusion caused by passengers coming on board, boxes being lowered into the hold, and people coaling, so distracted and amused little Francis, that he was quite good in his new nurse's arms.

Meyrick looked very sad and thoughtful, as he stood holding one of his Nana's hands, the only nurse he had ever known, and just as the bell rang for visitors to leave the steamer, before she loosed her moorings, he kissed her very affectionately, and said, "Good-bye, dear Nana, I wish you were coming with us, can't you now?" and his little voice faltered as he added, "I shan't half be able to take care of Meta alone, you know."

He had said "good-bye" already to Mr. Hilliard, and "thank-you" for being so kind to him. Then Thoney said "good-bye" to all the children. Nana next kissed Francis, and Meta last of all. She had to struggle to free herself from the grasp of the poor little girl, and then it was that Meta's little heart felt ready to break, and she could hardly tell what was happening, as Nana and Thoney stepped quite off the steamer, down to the wharf.

We can tell, for the attaching ropes were thrown back on to the steamer, she shunted, turned, and was in real earnest under weigh.

Meta gazed at Nana through her tears. There she

stood beside Thoney, and they were both crying. Mr. Hilliard was on her other side.

Oh, how the little girl wished that she were beside her, as quicker and quicker the large ship bore her farther away from her!

Then it was that we heard her say again and again "good-bye" to her Nana.

The children watched her and Thoney on the wharf till they quite disappeared, and then they watched the wharf itself till it disappeared also. "No cry more, Miss Meta," the new Nana said, trying to lead the child away from the side of the vessel; "see, Mars' Baby quite good," but no sooner had she spoken those words than the child, hearing her strange voice, began to cry.

Jimmy sat down upon the deck and took him on to his lap, telling Meyrick and Meta to sit on either side of him.

He thought they would like to see the last of the island of Jamaica as they skirted it, and Nana had told him to keep them on deck as much as he could. Several people now looked at the little Clevelands. At first everybody was taken up with his or her own peculiar joys, sorrows, regrets, expectations, on leaving one country to visit another; but now, as they noticed three little children dressed in black, one of them very, very sad, accompanied by a black man and woman, their kind curiosity was excited. Many hearts were still full of last year's horrible rebellion atrocities, and when one and another heard that both the children's parents had fallen victims to it, they felt deeply for them.

Meyrick went round to his sister's side and whispered, "If you don't cry, Meta, I'll take such care of you; Nana said she would come some day to England if she could, and I think she will, and, look, there are such lots of things to see. You shouldn't lose them all. You know we are in such a big ship and it has large rooms and small bedrooms and kitchens and all sorts of places, isn't it funny; and we're going along on the sea, and all that's Jamaica over there, and I suppose we shall never, never, never, *never* see it again, but we said 'good-bye' to mother's and father's grave, didn't we?"

This speech did not comfort either Meta or Meyrick himself. Poor little boy, he had a very odd way of giving comfort sometimes, but having so far relieved his mind, he did not say anything more that was sad, and laid himself out, in real earnest, now, to amuse his sister.

"Did you see, Meta," he asked, "as we left the wharf how pretty it looked, and didn't those tall cocoa nuts look just as if they grew up out of the coals and houses that were there?"

"I didn't see," she answered; "I only saw Nana, did Nana see it?"

The little girl was covering her eyes with her hands, and baby, thinking that she was playing "Bo-peep" with him, put up his little hands to draw hers down.

"But isn't Kingston big, Jimmy?" he asked, "when we look at it from the sea, and look at all the houses and hills behind."

"Big fe true, Mars' Meyrick."

"I say, Jimmy, look! we are coming quite near to something now."

"Dat Port Royal."

"And mountains are now on both sides. Oh, how pretty, isn't it? but I wonder what that red building is!"

"The hospital," said Jimmy.

"And look at all the cocoa-nut trees, Meta, at Port Royal and the ships round, do you see?"

"Yes," she answered, as though now she were really beginning to take an interest in what Meyrick pointed out.

"Why, isn't this another town, Jimmy?" Meyrick asked, as the steamer, having received the commodore's letters from Port Royal, and having made a sort of tour of part of the island, faced Kingston again.

"Jamaica is a large place, Meta, isn't it just?" Meyrick went on.

"Yes," replied the child, now finding her little voice, "and poor Nana won't know how big it is because she hasn't come to see—what's that that's standing up there?"

"The Lighthouse," said Jimmy.

The next thing that amused the children was watching the sailors clean the deck. This was done so late to-day, instead of very early in the morning before passengers were up, because last night, and in the early morning, the sailors had been coaling.

Several people now came to speak to the children; Meta and Francis were shy, but Meyrick made friends easily.

Then Jimmy and their new acquaintances took the two elder children to walk up and down the deck. Francis had gone to sleep and Nana had carried him down into his cabin where she remained with him; Pedro was tied up on deck and Meta was very pleased when she was taken to see him. Mrs. Irving had written to say that he was to be brought to England, but he did not at all like being tied up during the voyage.

Then Jimmy took Meyrick and Meta to look all round the large saloon in which the tables and benches were all fastened to the floor, so that in rough weather they could not roll about, and where the lamps and glasses swung backwards and forwards as they hung from the ceiling.

One of the stewards gave Jimmy some biscuits for them, and they went on deck again; Meyrick then said that he thought it was very clever of the sailors to roll up the ropes in such stiff, round rings.

At twelve o'clock a bell rang to summon the grown-up people to lunch, at one o'clock the children's dinner was ready, and then all the children, their nurses, the servants and stewardesses dined together. Meyrick and Meta made friends with several little children at dinner, some of whom were to be their companions for the whole voyage; a few were to land soon at the island of Barbados.

Meyrick said he liked ship-dinners, for they were beautiful.

Five o'clock was the people's dinner hour, at six the children had their tea—tea for the grown-up people following after that, and Meyrick said, as he

watched the stewards through the saloon windows, that opened on to the deck, that they were laying and clearing away meals, it seemed, all day long.

Meta cheered up a great deal during the day, but when evening came, she cried for Nana, and did not want to let her new nurse put her to bed.

She had to yield at last, and when she was told that if she cried she made Francis cry too, she did try to be a good girl.

There was plenty to amuse the children and divert their little minds.

It was poor Nana, left alone at Kingston, whom we must pity most, for she it was who was fretting and grieving and feeling all alone. Children soon forget troubles, soon find new pleasures and friends when they lose old ones; Meyrick and Meta are children, and are therefore likely to do the same, but God only knew what it cost their Nana to remain behind on Kingston Wharf and see the Royal Mail steamer carry those little ones right away from her.

CHAPTER XLV.

OBJECT LESSONS AT SEA.

THE next morning very early the ship stopped. Jimmy was up and Meyrick was dressing, for the little boy was very anxious to be on deck again.

"Hi, Mars' Meyrick," said Jimmy, "us somewhere now, cause us stop."

Meyrick jumped on to his berth and looked out of the port-hole.

"We don't seem to be quite there, Jimmy," said Meyrick; "if I'm very quick, I might be in time, and I have said my prayers you know, so I can hurry."

A very few minutes afterwards Jimmy and Meyrick were on deck, the little boy perched on the man's shoulders so as to see very well.

"We have stopped, Jimmy," Meyrick cried, "and it seems we are not going any nearer, I wonder what's the good of stopping here."

"Water not enough deep go more shore," said Jimmy.

"Where do you think we are, Jimmy?"

The man did not know.

A sailor told them that they were at Jacmel in Haïti.

Meyrick was in time to see the little mail boat lowered, the mail bags put into her, the second officer step down into the boat and go off to land the mails.

The steamer stayed a very short time at Jacmel, but her passengers could see the Island of Haïti for a long time.

At eight o'clock the children breakfasted, at nine the grown-up people, and when, after breakfast, the children hurried up on deck, they were still passing that island.

"Now, Meta," said Meyrick, "you can see what an island is, what is it?" he asked.

"Hills?" she replied doubtfully. Poor little Meta had learnt very few lessons as yet.

"Not always; what are we on?"

"A ship."

"But what's the ship on?"

"Sea."

"Yes, well that big Haïti is right in the sea, so it's an island, because it has got water all round it."

"Yes," said Meta, and after some little while when she could see, from the distance, both ends of the large island of Haïti, the sight gave her a very good idea of what an island was, and she really profited by Meyrick's object lesson.

"And is that the same place we saw before breakfast?" asked Meta.

"Yes," answered Meyrick, "but one of the sailors told me that we had gone round it."

"Oh, just look at all those birds flying over the water," Meta then exclaimed, as the steamer passed

so near to a rock that they could even see the English flags at its foot.

Few children suffer from sea-sickness. So much the better for them!

Meyrick and Meta were capital sailors, and Francis, like most babies, slept more on board ship than he did on shore. This was a very good thing for his nurse, to whom it took him some time to grow accustomed, as well as for himself.

The weather was intensely hot, making the cabins, at times, almost unbearable, even with their port-holes open, and the children could do very little running about on deck.

As the awning was up, they were not always obliged to wear their hats.

It was much cooler after tea, so Jimmy and Nana then allowed them to stay upon deck a little while.

They could then watch the phosphorescence. This was a sparkling light, caused by bands of little insects hovering over the sea.

The next morning they passed the island of Mona, and several others during the day.

"That's in the sea too," said Meta, as she first caught sight of "Mona," "so it must have water all round it, and must be an island."

Meyrick told Meta that she was a very good girl to remember so well, and he would teach her some more when he saw *it.*

That evening they passed Porto Rico, and the following morning brought them to St. Thomas.

Here the town looked very pretty from the distance as they steered into the land-locked harbour.

There were three mounds of houses to be seen, each mound ending with one single house, and all were surrounded and topped by hills. The town lay between the mounds.

Here again the mails were landed in the company's little mail-boat and passengers for St. Thomas went on shore in small boats that came along-side of the Royal Mail steamer to fetch them, directly she anchored. Jimmy told Meyrick that he would have taken him to land and see the place if it had not been for leaving the other two children.

A pretty, good-natured brown woman came on board at St. Thomas, bringing different things for sale, little baskets, fitting one into the other, until the last was the tiniest basket, Meta said, that she had ever seen; bracelets and necklaces made from seeds that grew on trees, other trinkets, bottles of guava jelly, limes and tamarinds; but the best of Rachel Hobeb, the vendor of these things, was that she knew so much to tell Meyrick about all kinds of places and things.

Those three mounds, she said, were English, French and Danish St. Thomas. Then she asked Meyrick, and Frank, a friend he had made on board, three years older than himself, if they had ever heard about Blue Beard.

"Oh, yes, of course," they answered, "he killed his wives."

"Well that castle on Government Hill, the mound to the right, is Blue Beard's castle."

"Tell us something about Blue Beard's castle," said Meyrick.

"There were three brothers," Rachel began, "who were all cruel men and killed their wives. Blue Beard, the youngest, was the most cruel. He and Black Beard lived on Government Hill, White Beard lived in the town before the fort. Inside Blue Beard's castle are still kept his keys and his statue."

When the island of St. Thomas was discovered, Rachel told the boys, it had no inhabitants but the Beards, and they were pirates.

"What are pirates?" asked Meyrick.

"Sea robbers," said Frank.

Rachel told the boys many more things about St. Thomas, but perhaps it would not interest you to hear any more.

The steamer remained all day long at this island, and whilst anchoring there the children saw a shark; they were very much amused by watching black boys dive off little boats into the deep sea after three-penny pieces, that were thrown into the water from the steamer for them, and bring them back in their mouths.

Later during the voyage, Meyrick and Frank watched the gentlemen play at a ship game called "Bull," when the boys helped to remember their scores for them.

Sometimes whilst the gentlemen were at dinner, they would try and play this game themselves, but they could not manage it at all.

Meyrick liked to see the sailors take down the awning of an evening, and put it up again in the morning, and one day he told Meta, as together they watched the sailors balancing themselves on very dan-

gerous places, that he should like to do that, and that he thought he should be a sailor when he was older.

"But how can you take care of me then?" she asked.

"Oh, I forgot," he answered, "of course I can't be a sailor now."

Meyrick was a universal little favourite on board because he was such a manly little fellow. Somehow or other he seemed to take an interest in everything that went on during the day.

He was often to be seen standing on deck, very near to the captain and his officers when, at twelve o'clock, they were taking the time by the sun, and he always listened to hear how many knots the ship had run her last hour, when the log was taken.

Little Meta had also very many admirers on board, because of her gentle bearing and great kindness towards her little baby brother, with whom she often played and whom she helped very carefully to walk along on deck when he could not manage to stand there alone.

And then the little one looked so sad at times, that people wanted to comfort her. Every now and then some one or other would save a little dessert after dinner, and carry it to the little Clevelands.

Most islands seemed to have some story of interest connected with them. When Martinique was passed the captain told the boys that here the Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon Buonaparte, was born.

"Wasn't she very beautiful?" asked Frank.

"Yes," answered the captain, "she was very beautiful and also very good."

Just beyond Martinique a small rock stood all alone. This, the children were told, was called Diamond rock. It was about one mile round, was only accessible at the leeward, and only there when there was no surf. Any one who landed had to creep through crannies and dangerous steeps, down to the windward side, where a sloping grove of wild fig trees, clinging to cracks of the stone, were pointed out to the children. In this fortress, Meyrick heard with interest, Lieutenant James Wilkie Maurice was established with 120 men and boys, ammunition, provender and water for four months, but in June 1805 they had to surrender, for want of powder, to a French squadron, a frigate, a corvette and eleven gunboats, after killing and wounding seventy men on the rock alone, destroying three gunboats, with a loss to themselves of two men killed and one wounded.

"Why just look at Diamond rock, Meta," said Meyrick, "it's like 'The Retreat.'"

Jimmy, who was standing by, laughed.

"Favour Negro House, fe true, Mars' Meyrick," he said.

"Yes," replied the boy, "there is the thatch at the top and a door, and now we've got farther round it I can see a shutter."

"Oh yes," said Meta, "but do you mean really?"

"Only make believe, Meta, of course, but it is just like it, isn't it, Frank?"

The next morning the ship anchored at Barbados. As at St. Thomas the mails were landed in one of the company's little boats, small boats also coming from shore to fetch passengers and luggage.

No hills were to be seen here. Barbados looked like a long level island, on which were many sugar-cane pieces stretching far into the distance.

Round the coast the children discerned a great many huts, or little houses, at the backs of which rose mango, and cocoa-nut palm trees.

Great Houses of different sizes and shapes were scattered here and there, some so pretty that they looked as if they were quite as pretty as Woodlands, the children said, and Meyrick could make out churches, and showed Meta several windmills with sails going round.

When they left Barbados it was bedtime, and the next morning when Meyrick looked out he could see nothing but water, and he was told that he would see no land again for a great many days.

He could look out still for flying fish, for as long as they were in the tropics these might be seen. Meta said she had not seen one flying fish, so her brother promised to try and "find" her some, and then call her, which he did.

On Sundays Jimmy, Meyrick, and Meta, went to service in the saloon.

Francis was learning to be very good with his new Nana, who played with and amused him. Very often during the voyage the children talked of, and longed for, their old one, and many a time Meta, in her little berth, cried herself to sleep, because she wanted her and mother.

Meyrick often thought of his parents, and if any of the gentlemen on board talked about the rebellion, and he heard them, the little fellow would tell them what a good, brave man his father was, and how

pretty his mother, and that it was all the rebels' fault that they had died.

All the ship's servants mustered on deck before service on Sundays.

The officers, including the ship's doctor, the sailors, stewards and stewardesses stood in a line along the ship's side, when the captain walked down the line, with the purser beside him, who called out the different names, to which every one answered in turn.

The children liked to watch the mustering, also the fire-drill, which took place on Fridays.

But soon there was a great change in the weather, and four days after they left Barbados the children had to be wrapped in warmer clothing, and were only allowed on deck at times.

They then played a great deal in the fore-saloon. "Old Nana" had given Meta a pretty new doll; with which she played with two little girls, Edith and Lilla Blunt, and as Meyrick's present from Nana was a box of soldiers and two cannons he made a sham fight.

Meta loved this doll, and she was her constant companion on board, and had to listen patiently to many of the little girl's troubles.

Meyrick had also a few books with him, and so had Jimmy, therefore these two could at times amuse themselves by reading. Nana did needle-work when Francis allowed her to do it.

Meyrick had one very strange friend on board, about whom I must tell you.

He was a monkey, and his master had made him very fond of Meyrick.

His usual place was in a cage in the cow-house, where the butcher fed him, but sometimes he was

taken out of his cage, and then he would often sit on Meyrick's lap or on a bench beside him. He would go to the little boy's pockets and take things out of them, look for things which Meyrick hid for him to find, and hide things for Meyrick to seek. Jimbo would take a pin out of Meyrick's coat if for fun he stuck it in there, and would, when shown his own portrait in a small looking-glass, kiss it and look and feel all round the back to find himself. This was very funny, and although Francis had been frightened of Jimbo at first, he now laughed very loudly at his funny tricks and so did Meta. The children would save him nuts, biscuits, and sugar, all of which he liked. One day he took a nut out of Meta's pocket when she was not looking.

"Which do you like best, Meta?" asked Meyrick the first day they had put on their new, warm clothes, these new things, or the shabby ones we wore at 'The Retreat?'"

"These," said Meta, "don't you?"

"Yes, but I liked Jimmy's house so much," said Meyrick, "and our grounds and the bees, and isn't it a pity I can't make calabashes quite alone yet, and poor Nana!"

Meta pulled out her little handkerchief.

"I didn't mean you to do that," said Meyrick, coaxing his sister, "I'm very sorry;" and he took out of his pockets some nuts that Frank's father had given to him, and put all but two, upon Meta's lap. Those two he must save for poor Jimbo!

Meta liked nuts, and they had the desired effect. She forgot her sorrow to eat them.

CHAPTER XLVI.

IN ENGLAND.

"OH, Mars' Meyrick, it well cold now," Jimmy said, as one rather rough day towards the end of the voyage, these two were on deck together, the little boy holding the man's hand and pulling him along, to make him run fast and get warm, as he said he was getting.

Meyrick thought rather rough weather good fun, and laughed when such a lurch came that he and Jimmy had one moment to stand quite still to balance themselves, and the next, were obliged to give themselves up to be sent tumbling to the side of the ship, there to hold on, till they found their own proper balance again. Meyrick had wanted Meta to come up and have a run too this morning, but Jimmy had said that it was too cold for her, and she had better remain below.

It was becoming almost a habit with Meyrick to think of his little sister now, as it is, I am afraid, a habit with some children to be cantankerous and disagreeable, and think continually of themselves.

The sailors told Jimmy and Meyrick one morning, that they had passed the Azores in the night, and that

the rough weather was helping them on finely because, as the wind was in their favour, their sails were up. Jimmy and Meyrick did not stay on deck very long at a time now.

It is a well-known fact that the extremes of heat and cold are felt at sea, and although it was the month of May our little passengers complained very often of the cold.

But the voyage was very nearly at an end now. The next communication that the sailors had to make to Jimmy was that they were in British waters. He was pleased to hear this, for he wanted to be at the journey's end.

Meyrick and Meta could now see several ships in the distance, and as they had not caught sight of one since they left Barbados this was a treat to them.

When one ship passed near to the Royal Mail steamer both ships dipped their flags into the water, and then the captains of the two ships carried on a conversation with flags.

A gentleman lent Meyrick a glass through which to look at this vessel and he could see her very plainly—she was a man-of-war. When the little boy asked the captain afterwards what they had said, he was told that the captain of the "man-of-war" had asked, "Are you going home?"

Their ship had answered "yes," and then from the other ship was said, "report us" and the vessel's name was given.

This was called the language of flags.

And then English *land* was sighted! How Jimmy

Nana, Meyrick and Meta strained their eyes to see what this was like, but the first glimpse they had of English land was from too great a distance to tell them what it was like.

But every moment it became more and more distinct!

The sailors were soon very busy bringing up from the hold the baggage of passengers for Plymouth; the little Clevelands were to go on to Southampton. Frank landed at Plymouth, so Meyrick lost his friend, and many other people also here ended their journey.

Mr. Hilliard had given Jimmy a telegraphic message, written out, which he was to send to Mrs. Irving from here, to say that the children had arrived so far in safety, and when the clerk from the telegraph office came on board for telegrams, one of the stewards gave Jimmy's message to him. As soon as the mails and passengers were landed, the Royal Mail steamer left again to cross the channel to go to Cherbourg, in France, there also to land passengers. A few people only were now on board. Meyrick and Meta missed a good many of their friends from the children's table.

The ship was much longer returning from Cherbourg than she was going to that place, for in the channel she was overtaken by so dense a fog that the ship could make but little progress, sometimes having to wait altogether and sound her fog whistle to warn other ships of her approach, but after some hours' patience the fog cleared off and the Royal Mail steamer anchored in Southampton Water. The tide did not allow her to go right into

the harbour, so the tender, a small steamer, came in answer to a whistle-call, down the Southampton Water to fetch the passengers and luggage. Jimmy and Nana thought England very beautiful. There were no palm trees, these they missed, but the glimpses of places they had had from the water pleased them very much and made them think that England must be a very pretty country.

There was bustle and excitement on board. Meyrick and Meta had been standing for some time, with the rest of the passengers ready dressed to land, watching the cabin-boxes being brought up. All the ship's servants seemed busy, especially the bedroom stewards who were in a hurry to get all the cabins cleared, so as to be off themselves for their holiday, as soon as possible. The pilot, who had come on board at Plymouth, and had remained there ever since, stood, with the captain, on the upper deck.

The children watched, with interest, whilst the baggage was hoisted from the Royal Mail steamer on to the tender, after she arrived alongside of her. Then the passengers said "good-bye" to one another, the Captain who had moved to the top of the steps leading down from the Royal Mail steamer, stood there seeing his passengers out safely, wishing them "good-bye," and receiving their thanks for his kindness towards them, during their almost three weeks' voyage in the ship he commanded.

As Meyrick passed, he patted the little fellow on the head, in farewell. The Captain liked that boy. Few people did otherwise, and no liking seemed to

spoil Meyrick—he was so thoroughly un-selfconscious.

"Look, Meta, what a tremendously big ship we've been in," he went on, as from their present little steamer they looked at the very large one they had left, until they were out of sight of her, "isn't she large, I never saw anything like it!"

The children and Jimmy thought England prettier and prettier as they steamed down the Southampton water, passing the New Forest, and many other Hampshire scenes of beauty, on their way.

Meyrick did not know that he was looking at the New Forest, or Meta would have had a history lesson!

It felt quite warm now, for the wind had changed, and the sun shone brightly upon the smooth water.

Jimmy looked and felt very anxious as he stepped for the first time in his life upon English soil. Several gentlemen came forward to offer to help him look after his luggage, and direct him what to do, for English gentlemen, as fellow-passengers, are most kind in giving help to those who need it.

Jimmy was glad of this offer, for if English fellow-travellers are kind, many English street-children, and even some grown up people, he realized before he had walked two yards on English ground, are rude, uncouth, unfeeling, unmannerly and ill-bred, as with stare, smile and remark, they pain and disconcert the stranger who finds himself, unfortunately for himself, for the first time, alone and unprotected in their midst.

But a few minutes later Jimmy had no need to accept the aid of his fellow-travellers, for an

Englishman came up to him and asked if the name of the children of whom he had charge was Cleveland, because if so he had been sent by Mrs. Irving to bring them all safely home to her house in London. He then borrowed Jimmy's keys, passed all the boxes safely through the customs, and took tickets for the next train to London, in which the whole party travelled safely and quickly.

How strange everything seemed to these little creoles no child born and bred in England can imagine.

White people carrying boxes, white people driving cabs, white street boys, white porters, oh, it was all very funny, and Jimmy and Nana looked with admiration and surprise at little children's rosy cheeks, for they had seen no rosy cheeks like those before.

Some of the trees were very different to any they had ever seen, and so were the shapes of the houses, all built without verandah or piazzas, and many so very tall. There was so much to look at and admire as the train sped along that by the time the children arrived at their journey's end they were very tired. Travelling by the train itself was a great novelty to them!

"Hi! hi!" Jimmy and Nana exclaimed, as at Waterloo they jumped out of the railway carriage, into cabs that seemed to have come there on purpose for them. "What dis England here for a big, grand place."

They drove on over Waterloo Bridge, up the Strand, up Regent Street, fresh wonders presenting

themselves to the newly-arrived at every turn in the road.

"What stores, hi! Mars' Meyrick, look dem stores; hi! if Thoney see dat what him say?" Jimmy called out, as he pointed to the shops.

CHAPTER XLVII.

KIND AUNT IRVING.

AUNT IRVING bade the little ones very tenderly and lovingly welcome as she stood on the threshold of her home, ready herself to help to lift them out of the cab so soon as they should arrive.

They were cold again now, and both looked timid as Meyrick led Meta indoors.

Aunt Irving had thought the little ones would feel the cold, so ever since she had received Jimmy's telegram from Plymouth, she had had fires burning in the rooms that they would occupy.

Telling her man-servant to show Jimmy to his room, she led Nana and the children upstairs into the night-nursery, to take off their hats and out-of door-wraps, saying that tea would be quite ready for them as soon as they were ready for it.

How pretty the room looked ; lovely pictures hung upon its walls, whilst texts speaking specially to little children, also adorned them.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." "He took them up in His arms and blessed them." "He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom." "Be ye followers of

God as dear children." "Even a child is known by his doings."

These texts surrounded the walls.

A doll's house stood in one corner of the room, such a beauty, and little dolls, when it was opened, would be found within it. A ship and train were in the little dressing-room that led out of the night-nursery; these showing for whom that little room was set aside. A couple of baby's toys were near the doll's house.

The children did not make all the haste which they might perhaps have made had they thought most of hurrying down to tea. For whom were these toys?

They knew! Who had bought them for them? They guessed this also, and the kindness that had prompted this thoughtfulness would meet with its reward.

Such acts of forethought, of anticipating little children's wishes in so kind a way, perhaps win their hearts quicker than anything else, for they make them feel how much they are loved and cared for. And the coal-fire burning in the bedroom grate! How strange that looked! But the children said very little. They just looked at as much as they could whilst they suffered themselves to be made ready for tea, and a great deal of the weariness which they had taken into that room, vanished from their faces before they went out of it.

Meta had brought one of her dolls loose in her arms, the one Nana had given her, the one that was Nana's last present, and this she took courage to sit outside the doll's-house before she left the room.

"I hope you are very hungry for your first tea in Aunt Irving's house," that kind lady said, as she took Meta and Meyrick down to the dining-room.

Francis had caught a cold, so Aunt Irving said that he had better not be brought down again to-night, but should have his tea upstairs with Nana and Alice, an English maid engaged to help the nurse with the children.

They said they weren't very hungry, but their appetites came when they saw the good tea that had been prepared for them. Meta was allowed to sit very close to Meyrick.

High chairs stood round the table. These also had been procured for the children's use and comfort.

"I think I'm hungry now," said Meyrick; "do you think you are Meta?"

The little girl nodded her head. She felt almost too strange to speak, but not half so strange as she did before she saw that doll's house.

A very good tea had gone upstairs for Nana and Francis, and a quantity of good nursery milk, such as the little boy had not had for some time.

"Where's Jimmy?" asked Meyrick as he sat down.

"Having his tea in the kitchen," was Mrs. Irving's answer.

"He used to have it with us on board ship," said the little boy.

"Yes," added Meta, "and Nana and Francis and all the children."

"Who's that?" asked Meyrick, as Alice, the maid, went out of the room, carrying something in her hand.

When the children were told that she was an English servant engaged to help their Nana they were surprised.

"But she looks like a lady," they said, "and she wears boots and stockings always, just fancy!"

When Meyrick had finished his tea he asked if he might go and see Jimmy in the kitchen.

Mrs. Irving said he might as soon as he had spoken a little to her, and then she sat down by the fire and drew the little ones towards her, taking Meta on her lap.

Meta did not quite like to go there, but still she did not refuse. The old lady's eyes filled with tears as she looked at these two little ones.

"Mabel's and Sydney's children," she muttered to herself, "and they both dead, poor, poor Mabel!"

Meta held on to Meyrick and looked as if she almost wanted to cry.

Perhaps she was thinking of, and longing for her old Nana again. It seemed as though she could not forget her.

Aunt Irving's eyes were fixed on Meta's face.

"She's like Mother," said Meyrick, "you know she's like mother, I suppose. Those horrid, wicked rebels killed father and mother, and Jimmy hates them for it, and so do we, don't we, Meta?"

"Yes," answered the little girl.

"We must not hate any one, darlings," said Aunt Irving, "not even those who do us such deadly wrong."

"Do you know who I'm like?" asked Meyrick, apparently not taking in what Aunt Irving said, but

he added, in the same breath, and now beginning to cry, "oh we want father and mother so much, we don't know anybody here."

Meta's little hand went into her pocket to bring out the small handkerchief that was there stowed away.

"Poor pets," said Aunt Irving, "but you must not cry. You will soon know me very well I hope, and I will try to be mother, grandmother, auntie, everything to you if you will let me."

"Can you be all that?" asked Meyrick.

"But you can't be Nana," sighed Meta, "because you're not black."

"You have your Nana."

"Not our real, proper one, is she, Meyrick? That's just a new one come to take care of Francis on board ship; we don't say our hymns to this Nana, we haven't once."

"No," replied Meyrick, "we said them to Jimmy on board."

Mrs. Irving then remembered that Mrs. Hilliard had written to tell her that perhaps their old nurse would not accompany the children to England, but she had said that she still hoped to be able to persuade her to do so, as she herself was greatly attached to them.

Mrs. Hilliard had felt very angry with Nana for refusing to make this voyage with the children, and she had said to her husband that however good people seemed to be, it was impossible to account for what they would do.

She misjudged Nana when she tried to account for *her* actions.

Let us learn a lesson from this circumstance, and be this the lesson, that whilst we are, it may be, in the very lowest form of the school called self-knowledge, whilst we have very many difficult examinations to work up for, and pass in, before we have acquired the "prime wisdom" "know thyself," we attempt not to judge, or dare to think that we are to account for, the actions of our neighbours. Let us mend our own ways and believe in the good intentions of others even if these intentions do not always seem to us to be crowned with successful results.

"Why did not Nana come with you?" then asked Aunt Irving.

"She said she could not come," said Meta, "but would come 'noder time, will that be soon, do you think? oh, I want Nana so much."

Mrs. Irving, seeing that the children were tired, rang the bell to ask if Jimmy had finished his tea. When she heard that he had, she took them down to see him in the kitchen as they wished.

"This *is* a kitchen," exclaimed Meyrick as he stood inside the door. "Oh Jimmy, just fancy *this* a kitchen!"

"Hi, Mars' Meyrick, I say same ting; well England hab fine kitchens fe true."

"Jimmy," said Meta, who as she ran to the man, was lifted into his arms, "doesn't it seem funny not to be in the ship still, and isn't this fire big and hot?"

"Yes, Miss Meta, dat it be."

The cook spoke kindly to the children. Everybody seemed kind they thought. Then Aunt Irving asked Jimmy if he had made a good tea.

He looked towards Meyrick as though he did not understand.

"Hab plenty nyam," explained the little boy.

Jimmy was not accustomed to Mrs. Irving's voice.

"Oh, eat hearty tank you, old missis," answered the man.

"I think you little ones would now be best in bed," said Aunt Irving kindly; "come along to Nana and say Good-night."

Meta clung to Jimmy.

"Shan't we say our hymns to you Jimmy?" she asked.

Mrs. Irving overheard the question.

"Go up with them to-night, Jimmy," she said, "they do not seem as if they could get on without you," and, very glad to be allowed to do so, the kind-hearted man carried Meta upstairs, Meyrick following.

The children said their hymns to Jimmy, and after helping Meyrick into his little bed, in his dear little room, he wished the children all "Good-night," for Nana had put Meta and Francis to bed by then.

The house might have been built for the children, so well did it seem adapted to their use, and very, very soundly they slept that first night on shore in England in the comfortable little cribs good Aunt Irving had bought for them.

"Isn't it a good thing you bought two pairs of boots, Jimmy?" Meyrick asked as he jumped into bed, "because you'll always have to wear them now shan't you?"

"Yes, Mars' Meyrick."

Poor Jimmy looked very unhappy.

I wonder what he was thinking about in particular, when, as he left the room, he wiped his eyes.

Good faithful Jimmy. God will bless and reward you for working so lovingly and faithfully for Him in the persons of his little ones, "whose angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE PICTURE.

Two little children stood by themselves very early one morning in a prettily furnished sitting-room. The room was small but very tastefully arranged. It seemed to be full of things of value, not things made of gold or silver, nor of any costly workmanship, and therefore valuable to their present owner, but valuable because they were all presents from, or associated with, loved ones now gone very far away, aye, to their long home in the unseen land.

The two children were Meyrick and Meta; the morning following their arrival in England.

Aunt Irving told them overnight, when she went to kiss them in bed, that the toys they had seen in their rooms were for them, and that they could just look at them to-night and play with them as soon as they were dressed in the morning.

Also she told Meyrick that then he could go into the rooms in the house which he had not yet seen; he was very anxious to do this before he went to bed, but she said he was too tired then.

Although they had been so tired in the evening,

they were awake and up, very early the next morning. They played with their treasures for a short time, and then impulsive little Meyrick told Meta that she could come back to her dolls and doll's-house, but asked her just to go then with him and see what was to be seen in the other rooms.

She felt that she could play with her lovely new toys for ever, but Meyrick persuaded her that she could soon come back to them, and she would like to see something else, so the two children started on their voyage of discovery round, what was to them, quite a new world.

The room into which Meyrick first led Meta was on the floor below the nurseries. He chose to go into this room first because he liked the panelling of the door outside.

The shutters had been opened, so it was quite light within the room.

The children glanced all round, but in it their little eyes saw but one object.

They stood quite still, Meyrick with his right arm round Meta's neck, she with her left arm encircling his waist, gazing intently at a picture that hung over the mantel-piece.

Neither child spoke for some time.

The little ones seemed to be glued to the spot.

In the Jamaica mountains they had seen no life-size pictures, and this one was full of the deepest interest for them.

"Mother!" Meyrick faltered at last, "look, Meta, could you know it was mother?"

"Yes," she said, "but Meyrick," and the little girl

shook her little head to and fro and her right arm up and down, "but she can't speak, she can't kiss us!"

For half an hour the children stood still in front of that picture, they did not seem to want to look at any other part of the room, or house, now. Mother's nose, her mouth, her hair, her eyes, her hands and arms, her dress—every feature, one by one, every minute detail of her dress, had to be separately examined by the children.

They did not tire at all of looking at the same thing, and as they looked the face in the picture seemed to look at them, as good likenesses will so often.

"What's mother thinking now?" asked Meta.

Meyrick considered. "Perhaps, that I'm taking care of you," he then said, "because you know I am, so I should not wonder if that is it, and that she's glad I brought you here to see her."

"Anything else?"

Meyrick thought again. "Perhaps, she wants to say 'Be a good girl, Meta, and mind well what Meyrick tells you,'" said the little fellow very seriously.

"No, Meyrick," Meta answered angrily, "something nicer than that."

He looked again very hard at the picture and thought once more.

"It must be 'be a good girl,' I think, shall that be all?"

"No, I don't like that," said Meta.

"P'raps it's 'God bless you,' because mother did say that you know, didn't she?"

"Yes," said Meta, now quite satisfied.

"I shall like here now, shan't you, Meta?" asked her brother, "because mother's here, too; oh, but Meta, I wish God hadn't took her away from speaking to us! Isn't it a great pity she can't speak there?"

"Did God want her very much?" asked Meta.

"I s'pose so," answered Meyrick; "shall we go and look for Jimmy now and show him mother, because he'd like to see her too?"

As the children went out of the room, Meyrick's arm still round Meta's neck, they met Aunt Irving in the doorway. She had come to tell them that breakfast was ready, and to take them down to it, so they had to put off fetching Jimmy.

Meta, in fancy, was looking at that picture all breakfast time. Her disposition was not only quite different from Meyrick's, but different also from that of most children. She could not easily throw off an impression once made upon her, her little mind dwelt upon sorrowful things in a most sorrowful manner.

Francis did not come down to breakfast although his cold was a little better. It was arranged that he was to take all his meals in the day-nursery, until he was somewhat older.

After breakfast Jimmy helped Nana to unpack the children's things, which she at once put away, Meta helped Francis to play with his toys, showed him her doll's house, though she told him he must not touch anything in it, and Meyrick amused himself with his train, ship, and a horse and cart and harness that arrived for him that morning, but which ought to have come before, and the horse could be taken out and put into the cart whenever Meyrick liked.

Meta had found ever so many treasures in her very large doll's house. As soon as the little boy could get hold of Jimmy he took him to see the picture, and it pleased the man as much as it had the children.

Thus passed very pleasantly the first day at Aunt Irving's, and in the evening she showed them picture-books and told them stories till nearly bed-time.

Meyrick told her how he had done lessons at Woodlands with mother, but how he could not do any in the cave nor at "The Retreat," though he had done a few at Perivale, and she said he should now very soon begin to do lessons again.

He said he was glad, as he wanted to know a great deal, like father, "but," he added, "I think it's time Meta learnt something, too, because she isn't very far off six now, and six is getting on for a good age!"

"What's your name?" asked Meta, suddenly, as she sat on her old aunt's lap, and listened with a pout, to what Meyrick said.

As yet the children had not called her anything, and the servants all said "madam."

"Aunt Irving," she answered.

"I don't like that name," said Meyrick, "it's ugly."

"Would you like to call me 'Auntie?'"

"No, that's not a nice name at all either."

"Choose a name for me yourself, Meyrick."

He looked at her for a long time.

"You are kind like mother was," he then said, "and you speak like her, but you're too old to be quite like mother, should you like us very much to call you 'Old Mother?' because you are old, arn't you rather, and yet you said you were going to be a mother to

us, and you are like one, *liker* than anybody else; I think I'd like to say 'Old Mother,' would you Meta?"

"Yes," answered the child, "is that your name?"

"If you like to say it is," said Aunt Irving; "I think it will be a very pretty one," and from that time the children christened their good Aunt Irving "Old Mother," and she was never anything else to them, and the oftener the little lips spoke her new name, the prettier it sounded in her ears, and the very first words that Francis learnt to speak distinctly enough to be understood were "o'mudder."

CHAPTER XLIX.

JIMMY WANTS WORK.

IT was arranged that the children were not to go to school until after the Midsummer holidays, but "Old Mother" was to buy books and copy books for Meyrick and Meta to begin lessons at once with her. This arrangement was carried out.

Meta only seemed happy when she was at play, and then it had always to be the very play she chose and wanted.

She still fretted very much for her old Nana, especially when she was not allowed to have her own way entirely, and Old Mother could tell when she was fretful and quarrelsome that she had been spoilt very much before she came here. And this we know she had, for her Nana, since her parents' death, had given her her way in everything!

Neither of the children liked the confinement of a London house, after the free out-of-door life which they had led in the Blue Mountain-valley, but Meyrick grumbled much less than his sister, and was much more easily satisfied.

Old Mother up till now, had been very busy with one thing and another, so she had not had time to take Meta regularly in hand, but she had become

fond of the little girl whose face grew more and more like the life-size picture in the ante-room, although her disposition seemed more and more, as she knew it better, unlike the character of the original of that picture, but she hoped in a very short time, in spite of difficulties of disposition, to make a good little girl of Meta.

One day the children were in the dining-room, Meyrick doing an easy sum, Meta spelling little words with some toy letters, when they heard Old Mother and Jimmy talking together in the next room.

Meyrick suddenly put down his slate pencil, for he could not help hearing what they were saying.

Old Mother was asking Jimmy again about father, mother, and little Syd. Then she asked about the other Nana, and Jimmy told her that she was "not able to come to England" but that she was "well sorry 'bout it." Lastly Old Mother wanted to know about himself, and the Nana who was now out for a walk with Francis. Did they wish to stay in England or to go back to Jamaica, as they were entirely to please themselves?

Jimmy said that Nana did not wish to stay in England.

"And you, Jimmy?" asked the lady, "do not be afraid to do just what you like."

Jimmy said that there seemed to be no work for him here, and he did not like to be idle.

"If you stay, Jimmy, I will try and find you some work, but act entirely as you think best for yourself."

The black man was beginning to feel out of place in England. The children were but very little with

him except when they went for walks, and here he had no friends, no companions, and not much work, so perhaps he had better go back and help Nana to look for little Mars' Syd, he thought.

Meyrick dashed into the room where this conversation was being held.

"Oh, don't go, Jimmy, please don't," he pleaded, "let Nana go but you stay here."

"Yes," echoed Meta, who had followed her brother and had now caught hold of one of Jimmy's hands, as though thus to prevent his going away from them; "don't leave us Jimmy, because we don't like England either. There are no gardens to work in, no yams to dig, no coffee to pulp, nothing; oh, Jimmy, if you go back, do take us too, won't you?"

Old Mother did not know that the children could hear what she had been saying, and it grieved her very much to witness their distress.

"Don't you think, Old Mother," said Meyrick, "that you could find Jimmy somewhere a bit of ground to dig, because he doesn't mind walking a long way to it, and I could go with him sometimes, and show him the way. He's well used to dig, arn't you, Jimmy?"

Old Mother smiled as she answered:

"I'll see what can be done to find Jimmy work; meanwhile we'll settle that Jimmy does not go away from us, but you should not have left your lessons, so both of you get back to them at once. I am coming to you soon."

The children obeyed, and that morning Jimmy found himself a little useful work to do in the way of

carpentering; he repaired many little things that were broken in the house.

One day, soon after this, Meyrick begged for a copy-book for Jimmy, and then of an evening Aunt Irving's own maid taught him to write.

Meyrick and Meta very seldom troubled themselves now to think of little Syd. They had long ago quite learnt to believe that he was dead, although they still thought that it was strange he had not had a burial, when father, mother and their little sister Amy had all had one.

And thus time wore on, Aunt Irving in mothering the little orphan Clevelands beginning a new life at the age of fifty-five, but a new life that she lived well and happily, as she had lived most of her life changes, although so many of them would have seemed sad and wearisome to us.

No ground could be found for Jimmy to work, but after a few days it so happened that Mrs. Irving's butler gave notice to leave as he was going to be married, when Jimmy stepped into his place and became, after a little time, a very good butler to Mrs. Irving.

She said that her silver had never been better cleaned, that the boots had never worn a brighter polish, and that never had butler waited better at her table than when Jimmy had learnt his work thoroughly, and although he now had plenty to do, as much as he could wish, he generally found time every day for some kind of a walk with Mars' Meyrick, and always of an evening for his copy and Bible-reading.

Then the summer-months came, during which the

children were taken for nice long walks in the park, and often also for little excursions into the country.

Pedro had grown quite accustomed to life in Fitz-roy-Square, and the English climate seemed to suit him, for his coat was now by far more silky than it had been in Jamaica.

He was very fond of all the inmates of Old Mother's house, but showed most love still for Meta. He seemed to say that he must do his share of the bad work of spoiling her too!

Nana had returned to Jamaica, and Francis had an English nurse. He did not like her at all at first, but as she was very kind to, and patient with, him he soon grew fond of her in consequence.

CHAPTER L.

"CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS,
FOR THOU SHALT FIND IT AFTER MANY DAYS."

THEN came *such* a pleasure, oh, one to which Meyrick and Meta had looked forward ever since they first heard it talked about.

They were to have a trip to the sea-side. Old Mother and nurse were to take them; the nursemaid, Alice and Jimmy were to come also.

Bournemouth was the lovely watering place selected, and during their month's stay there they spent hours by the sea paddling in it and building sand castles, hills, Negro houses, gardens, battlements. Then they had drives in goat and donkey chaises, donkey-rides, and such beautiful carriage-drives with Old Mother. They were out almost from morning till night whenever it was fine.

One day whilst Meyrick was building a Great House on the sands for a change, Jimmy and Meta helping him—because as it was to be called "Woodlands" when it was finished, it had to be a very splendid house, indeed—he heard some people talking rather loudly, and when he looked round, he saw a policeman leading a boy, a good deal older than himself, off the sands. The boy was crying, and when Mey-

rick put down his spade and just ran up to him and asked what was the matter, he heard somebody say that the boy had stolen a little dog in the hopes of getting a reward for it, and that the policeman had seen him pick it up and hide it, and was now going to punish him for his naughtiness.

The boy looked very unhappy, and Meyrick looked very much surprised.

"Stolen!" he said, "a white boy steal!"

The exclamation came so naturally from Meyrick, who had till so lately lived in a country where white boys would not be thought capable of so disgraceful an act!

The boy-thief heard the exclamation, and looked first at Meyrick, then at Jimmy, who now stood beside his little master.

Jimmy knew the boy again, for he had very often made fun of, and laughed at the man for being black since he had been at Bournemouth, never having seen a black man before.

How he wished now that he could change places with Jimmy, with anybody, so long as he could be innocent of the crime which had so shocked the young gentleman and for which he was now to be punished.

This punishment was to go to prison for the night, or to pay a florin.

"Let me go, let me go," sobbed the boy, "and I will pay to-morrow. I'll try to earn the money, I will indeed, oh, let me go."

"I say, how much is it?" asked Meyrick, running up to the policeman—"how much is the money?"

"Two shillings, sir," said the man.

"And if that's paid won't he go to prison?"

Meyrick did not know what a prison meant, but he thought it must be some dreadful place, as the boy, whom the crowd called "Bill," was crying so much because he had to go there.

"Oh please just wait a minute," said the little boy, diving into his pocket, "I've got a shilling that 'Old Mother' gave me to have a long donkey-ride with, and Jimmy and Meta have got sixpence each too—if you'll just come here, we'll give it to you."

The crowd had separated Meyrick from Jimmy and Meta, a crowd of little children who were following out of idle curiosity, because their hardened little hearts found pleasure, it seemed, in seeing a companion punished.

The policeman smiled at Meyrick's eagerness, and the idle lookers-on now stood aside to let Bill, and the little boy, who had caught hold of his hand to lead him, and the policeman, pass to the black man and little girl.

Meyrick was too excited to see anybody in that crowd but the policeman and the boy who had stolen the little dog.

"Jimmy," said Meyrick, "I've only got this one shilling and if I had two the policeman would let the boy go, you brought sixpence out with you, didn't you, and Meta you've got sixpence too—won't you give them to me?"

The little girl drew out of her pocket the money that Meyrick wanted, and gave it to her brother, who received Jimmy's sixpence too.

Both of them had more at home, but it *was* a trial to part with these sixpences now, for Meta had promised herself a donkey-ride that very morning, and little children do not like to postpone pleasures, as you well know, and Jimmy, who was very thirsty, had just resolved to spend, at least half of that money on some cool drink that was being sold upon the sands.

But they did not hesitate to give the money, and Meyrick had the delight of seeing the boy Bill released the next moment, with a stern admonition from the policeman, not to steal again.

Jimmy's and the children's money was like "Bread cast upon the waters to be found by them after many days" like "seed sown upon good ground to bring forth fruit one hundred-fold."

Bill never stole again; Bill never forgot the kind little boy and girl, and the good black man whom he had derided, who paid two shillings of their own money to get him off a punishment—a punishment that might still more have hardened him than he was hardened already, who did not know why sin was sin, and therefore so very wicked—and he never forgot either Meyrick's cry of surprise "A white boy steal!"

Bill ran right away, back to his poor home now, Meyrick went back to his sand-Woodlands, but the next time that Bill saw Jimmy, Meyrick and Meta on the sands, he went up to them, looking very much ashamed of himself and in a sort of way said "thank-you" for what they had done for him.

It so happened that Old Mother was also on

the sands that day, but sitting a little apart from the rest, reading, so Bill did not see her. She called the boy to her, and then spoke kindly to him, explaining that it was a great sin for him to steal, not because his face was white, as Meyrick had seemed to have led him to think, but because a Saviour, the Lord Jesus, had died on the Cross to make white his soul.

She told him to go to Sunday-school and there learn more about all this, which he soon did, and for years to come, aye, when poor Bill died, he thanked God for sending the little boy and girl and forgiving black man, at whose expense he had made such sport, to the sands that day to save him from going to prison, and to make him sorry for, and give up the sin, that was sending him thither.

Was not this good interest on the children's pence, poor Bill turned from the error of his ways to know and love God his Saviour, and to learn to keep His Commandments ?

Let us hope that many children in the crowd that day learnt a lesson also—to be sorry instead of, as they then seemed to be, glad when a little fellow-creature, a little fellow-sinner, falls into sin, and to show their sorrow by trying, when it lies in their power to do so, to save and rescue him from sin and its consequences, far more terrible even than an earthly prison-house !

CHAPTER LI.

THE PICTURE-ROOM.

"COME, Master Meyrick, it time go school," Jimmy said, one morning in September, when the holidays were all over, and Meyrick began, in real earnest, to go to a day-school, to which Jimmy took, and from which he fetched him.

"All right, Jimmy," answered Meyrick; "but whatever do you call me that ugly name for? Don't do it, Jimmy, I can't bear it, and if you call me it again I shan't answer."

"What name?"

"*Master* Meyrick, Jimmy, I don't want to be Master Meyrick, I won't be *Master* Meyrick; because other people say it, *you* needn't Jimmy."

"Mars' Meyrick den," said the man, who thought that he was doing quite right to learn to speak like other people, and address his little master as they addressed him, but Meyrick, like so many of us, liked the old pet name with its pet associations with the good old days that have fled for ever and, child though he was, no doubt the name by which Jimmy was wont to call him carried him back to the "before-time" parent-days, when he was only and always "Meyrick" or "Mars' Meyrick."

The little boy now went regularly to school, and Meta had a morning governess at home. They had heard of old Nana through Mrs. Hilliard, and of Thoney too! That lady wrote to ask Mrs. Irving to tell the children, that Nana called very often at Perivale after the mail from England had arrived to hear tidings of her little ones, and to send "how days" to them. She did not seem to have taken another nurse's place, and yet she seemed to have no settled home. She did needle-work sometimes to earn money, and sometimes she took odd places for a few weeks together.

This was what Mrs. Hilliard gathered, but the woman seemed strange and reserved in her manner, and to care for nothing but to hear about the children, whom she seemed still to love as fondly as ever.

Thoney was now Mr. Hilliard's coachman and doing very well.

He sent all sorts of messages to Mars' Meyrick, and said that he wouldn't like to be in England much, he thought, because he heard it was so cold there.

Jimmy's ground was paying pretty well, and he was glad that he had rented it of him.

He had sold his own as he had not time to work both, and he paid Mars' Hilliard the rent for Jimmy's, who had promised to send it to England, for him when he had an opportunity.

Meyrick liked very much going regularly to school, and Meta now learnt lessons every day also, with her morning-governess, whom Old Mother had engaged to come and teach her, thinking that it would be

better for the child to learn with a young lady, than an old woman, as she called herself, and she had now plenty to do without teaching.

Of an afternoon the little girl could be with her, or with Francis and his nurse, as she preferred.

Francis was sometimes with Old Mother, sometimes with his nurse, and sometimes with Jimmy. He was such a funny little fellow now, always trying to talk, and he seemed to like to be with Jimmy better than with anybody else.

He could say several words, and Jimmy seemed to understand them all!

Meyrick was now eight years old, Meta past six. The little boy made great progress at school, but Meta, much to Old Mother's sorrow, did not seem to get on with her lessons at all, did not grow happy or lively, and she said she could not bear lessons.

Meyrick used to tell her that if she'd only learn quickly to read a little easily, she'd like reading very much then, but she was still battling over her one-syllables.

Meta seemed to be most happy when sitting all alone with her dolls, playing with them (she never gave *them* lessons), and putting their things away in their beautiful house.

She had several children now altogether. There were the little new ones Old Mother had given her, Rosie, Nana's gift, and Jessie. She could not part with Jessie, because of Pedro, and because Jessie had lived at Woodlands, and "Father and Mother liked her."

Nana, had made her some pretty new clothes, in

which to come to England, and as she had been packed away, in a box very carefully, they had not been at all spoilt on board, but Rosie was the favourite, because Nana had given Rosie to Meta, the last present before the child left Jamaica.

On Meyrick's half-holidays Old Mother used to take the children very often for pretty walks, or drives, or to see the shops, or better still, to the Zoological Gardens, or some other place of amusement.

They had been twice to the Zoological Gardens, and whenever Jimmy could be spared from his work, he went to these places also, and this was a great treat for him.

Meyrick, he and Meta had great fun riding upon the elephant! How they wished Thoney could have seen them, and have ridden too!

The evenings were generally very happy times for the children, for then Old Mother played with them at all sorts of quiet games.

Except on half-holidays, Meyrick went for a walk with his school, and directly he came home of an afternoon, he learnt his lessons for the next day, so as to have nothing to do after tea, at five o'clock, but play.

Old Mother would not allow a lesson-book to be brought out after tea; if the lessons were not known by tea-time, they had to be learnt before school next morning.

Miss Owen, Meta's governess, could not love her little pupil very much, because she was so often idle and troublesome, and after she had been naughty, never said that she was sorry.

One morning Old Mother went into Meta's little school-room, as she often did, to see how the little girl was getting on, and she found her standing, crying in a corner.

She asked Miss Owen what was the matter with the child, who then showed Old Mother a lesson-book, very much torn and soiled, out of which Meta had wanted her to hear her lesson, and when Miss Owen asked Meta how she had so spoilt her book, she would not answer, and when she told her that it was naughty so to use her lesson-books, and desired her also to say she was sorry to have made this one so untidy, and that she would try to take better care of it another time, Meta still refused to answer, and Miss Owen had then stood the little girl into the corner, until she was obedient.

"Why will you not answer Miss Owen, Meta?" asked Old Mother.

The child made no reply.

It was Friday and five minutes to twelve o'clock.

At twelve Miss Owen would go, and then not come again until Monday as she had been invited into the country from Friday afternoon till early Monday morning, and had, in consequence, asked Mrs. Irving to excuse her coming on Saturday morning, when Meta was to have a whole holiday.

"Meta, Miss Owen will soon be going until Monday morning," said Old Mother, "will you not obey her before she goes?"

Still the little girl made no answer, and not long after Old Mother had said those words Miss Owen went away.

Old Mother talked kindly to Meta until it was time for her to go and be dressed for dinner, trying hard to make her say that she was sorry to have made her pretty new spelling book so very untidy, and to tell Old Mother how she had done it, but the strangely-determined little girl had not a word to say.

When Meyrick came home from school, Meta was still obstinate, and the same all the afternoon.

Old Mother could then not allow her to hear stories or play with Meyrick in the evening, and sent her to stay in the nursery with nurse and Francis.

When the child came down to say "good-night" before she went to bed, Old Mother tried to coax her again to be good, but she would not be coaxed; still her kind old aunt did not refuse to kiss the naughty little one, as some real parents might perhaps have done; she would have deemed it unwise to act thus, and Meta went naughty to bed.

Next day was Saturday. Meyrick and Meta were to have gone in the afternoon to Madame Tussaud's to see her beautiful exhibition of wax-work figures, but Old Mother told Meta in the morning, that she would not be able to take her unless she were a good girl by then.

The naughty, wilful temper still remained, and when Meyrick went there with Old Mother after dinner, Meta had to be left at home.

"Meta, darling," said Old Mother, when they came back again, both having spent a rather sad, instead of a happy afternoon, because Meta was not with them and they wanted her very much, "to-morrow is Sunday, but you know I cannot take a little girl to

church who is proud and obstinate. It would grieve God to see her there in such a spirit, and it will grieve Him very, very much to see her left at home because she will not try to be a better girl; go now, Meta, and sit in the picture-room by yourself for a little time, and think how sad it is to be naughty, to disobey Miss Owen and Old Mother and make them unhappy, and to grieve God. Then come and tell me before you go to bed that you are sorry for your naughtiness."

The picture-room was the children's name for that room in which hung their mother's portrait.

"May I take Rosie and Jessie with me?" asked Meta.

"Yes," said Old Mother.

Then the little girl started off, carrying her two dolls with her, Pedro following.

What a very odd little girl Meta was!

She had no fear of sitting alone, or Old Mother would not have sent her to do so.

The children were never allowed to do anything that frightened them.

From choice Meta very often sat alone with her dolls.

She walked up and down the room first putting Jessie to sleep, then trying to put Rosie. But Rosie was not sleepy and kept awake.

She put Jessie carefully on to a small table, which she made believe to be her bed. Then she sat down in front of the table herself and rocked Rosie to and fro.

The picture faced her, and presently, as she sang

to her doll and tried to soothe her off to sleep, she caught sight of it.

Mother seemed to be looking at her very sadly to-day.

She told Rosie to look at the picture too.

"What should you think mother is thinking now?" she asked of Rosie.

Of course the doll made no answer.

"What should you think, Pedro?"

Pedro wagged his tail.

"I wish Meyrick would come and tell me," said Meta; then she looked again, she kept on looking, and as she looked she wiped tears from her little eyes that had gathered there whilst she was looking.

More and more tears came into the little, bright, blue eyes, so many, indeed, that soon Meta could not see the picture through them at all, and had to fetch out the little handkerchief once more.

"P'raps mother *is* saying, 'Meta, are you a good little girl?'" whimpered the child as though in answer to something that had been whispered to her.

This fancy of what mother might be saying softened the little heart that for the last two days had seemed so stony, and penitent little Meta, who could only tell mother that she was not at all good, sobbed for half an hour.

"I think I'll go and say I'm sorry," thought Meta after a time, "I wonder if mother is saying 'go and say it Meta.'" She looked again.

"Yes, she is," she answered, "so I must go and you must come with me Rosie, as I shouldn't like to go quite alone, and we must be very quiet or we shall

wake Jessie, and she hasn't had half enough sleep yet, but I won't tell of you Pedro," she added, speaking to the dog, "or p'raps Miss Owen won't let you come into the school-room any more."

Meta and Pedro had really done the mischief to the book between them. First Meta had let her tears fall on to the page she was learning, then the book had slipped out of her hand and had fallen on to the ground. In falling it had torn.

Pedro accustomed to fetch things for his little master and mistress, went to pick it up, and hand it to her. He succeeded in doing this, but before it was again in Meta's hands the book had been more torn and further smeared by Pedro.

But the fault for which Meta was being punished was not having spoilt her book—this might have been easily forgiven—it was the stubborn pride that would not let her say she was sorry for having done it, and for not owning how the book had become so torn.

Holding Rosie very tightly Meta went out of the room.

"I wonder what mother is saying now," she said, as she glanced back at the picture from the door, "p'raps it is 'Meta's a good little girl now.'"

Meta trotted down stairs, opened the dining-room door and stood just inside it, looking very serious.

Old Mother beckoned to her with her hand.

The child, thus encouraged, ran towards Old Mother to be clasped in her arms, whilst she sobbed out, "Old Mother, I'm very sorry I wasn't sorry before."

"Are you also sorry, darling, that you spoilt

your book?" asked Old Mother, "and that you gave Miss Owen so much trouble?"

"Yes," said Meta, "and Pedro's sorry," she continued, as the large dog now followed her into the room; but she stopped short.

She had promised Pedro not to tell of him, and Meta was a child of her word.

But the next day Meyrick got the secret out of her, because Meta did not think that Pedro would mind Meyrick knowing, and then he, thinking that if Old Mother knew it had been half Pedro's fault, she would not be at all angry with Meta, told her, and Old Mother was not at all angry with Pedro, because he was a dog and did not know better, but she told Meta not to let him touch her books again, and that when she was asked a question another time, she must always answer at once quite truthfully, even though she might be afraid of getting Pedro into trouble.

The next half-holiday, Old Mother sent the children with nurse, Alice and Jimmy, to the Tower, and then Meyrick took so much care of Meta that he asked the Beefeater, who explained everything to them, to take his little sister's hand, which he did, and as Meyrick held her other hand, they both saw and heard everything very well indeed.

Meyrick enjoyed the Tower very much, but he begged Old Mother soon to take Meta to see Madame Tussaud's, as he did think she'd like that much better.

Old Mother said she would, and the next half-holiday that could be spared Meyrick, Meta, Jimmy and Old Mother visited the wax-works together, and

this time Old Mother and Meyrick enjoyed themselves also, because Meta was with them.

How many people one little child can, and so often does, make sad! Do naughty little children ever think of this I wonder?

Meta was really sorry now for having been so naughty, and that Saturday evening when she said her prayers, and also the day following that evening which she and the dolls had spent in the picture-room, when Old Mother took her to church, she told God that she was sorry too, and asked Him to forgive her, and without being told to do so, when Miss Owen came on the Monday morning, she said also to her that she was sorry she had spoilt the book, and that she would not do it any more if she could help it.

This was the beginning of a hard battle little Meta would have to fight throughout her life, with a stubborn, strong enemy within her, whose name was "Naughty Pride," but having gained one great victory over that enemy he was not nearly so powerful now, and if she persevered the rest would come much easier.

Old Mother, who was learning to understand the little girl, and love her more and more dearly, helped her in the struggle, and God, to whom Meta learnt from Old Mother to offer up very earnest, fervent little prayers, no doubt helped her also.

CHAPTER LII.

THE TOY-SHOPS.

ONE day Old Mother received a telegram from a great friend saying that her sister, also a very great friend of Aunt Irving's, was ill and wished particularly to see her; could she come over as soon as possible?

Of course she went, but as the distance was great she knew that she would have to remain there all night, and return the next day.

The children promised to be good, and Jimmy and nurse promised to take great care of them. It was holiday-time, so Miss Owen had left off coming for a while. Meta liked her lessons much better now, and was really a much better girl over them. She was beginning to read quite nicely because she was taking pains to do so, and she loved Old Mother ever so much better since she had punished her for being naughty than she had loved her before. Meyrick and Meta missed Old Mother very much the evening that she was away, and the next day Meta wanted to do something she said, to please and surprise her when she came back, so she told Meyrick that she was going to spend all her pennies to buy some pretty flowers to decorate Old Mother's bedroom. Meyrick said "all right," he'd get some too, and the

two children gave Jimmy their money to go out and spend on flowers for them.

The looking-glass was ornamented, the bedstead, the backs of the chairs, little vases were placed on the mantel-piece filled with flowers, little ornaments on the dressing-table were adorned, the decorations took the children a considerable time to put up, but when the work was finished, they thought the room looked "lovely" and were quite satisfied with their own handiwork.

Meta did so wish now that "Old Mother" would only come back before one flower faded; before she had so hoped that she wouldn't come until it was all ready, and she had both her wishes granted.

When Old Mother arrived home, tired and sad because her friend had died, although she was thankful to say she had been just in time to see her once again, the sight of what the little children had done to give her pleasure made her very happy. This pretty thoughtfulness touched her very much, and when Meyrick said that Meta thought of it, only he paid part of it and helped, and showed her a little how to do it, Old Mother was still more glad, for every one saw beauties in Meyrick's character, but the good in little Meta was much more hidden.

She kissed the children very fondly, but although they thought that they had made Old Mother glad, they little knew how very much this small act of a little child's thoughtfulness had pleased one who, hour by hour, day by day, week by week, and month by month, laid herself out to please them in small and great ways.

The months slipped by, and it was Christmas once again, the little ones' second winter in England! How funny they had thought the snow at first, how much they had felt the cold, and how Jimmy had wrapped himself up and repeated the words over and over again, "Well cold, well cold this!" they remembered very well, and now also they felt the cold very much again. Meyrick used to laugh sometimes and wonder what Thoney would say to an English winter, who even in Jamaica had sometimes sat in the sun in the early morning saying it was so cold that he wanted it to warm him.

"If he called that cold what would he call this?" Meyrick said one day to Jimmy.

Meyrick was a regular little schoolboy now, and he had several friends amongst his schoolfellows, who often came to spend half-holidays and have tea with him, and then he went to their houses, and if they had little sisters Meta would be asked too, and often allowed to go.

Meyrick and Meta were now both asked to "a splendid party," as Meyrick called it, that was to come off in two days' time, and Old Mother had accepted the invitation for them. Here there was to be a conjuror, a magic-lantern, and a Punch and Judy, and ever since the children had been in England they had looked forward to nothing as they did now to this entertainment.

Meyrick asked Old Mother if he and Meta might go that afternoon and choose a present for Ernest Campbell, the friend who had invited him to the party, which was to be given to celebrate his birthday.

Old Mother said that she could not take them then, as she was too busy to go out, and that she thought he had better wait until the next day, but he was all impatience to go at once and asked if somebody might not come with them then.

Old Mother said that Alice might go with Meyrick, but that she thought Meta had better stay at home as she had a cold, and it was getting a little late for her to go out.

But Meyrick wanted Meta to help him choose the present, he pleaded, and they'd choose it quickly and wouldn't be out long if she might only go.

"You know, Old Mother," he added, "I always take care of Meta, and I won't let her stay out late if you'll let her go this time."

Old Mother knew that Meyrick took care of his sister very well, and to reward him for so doing, she said she might go if they only went to the nearest toy-shop, and were very quick buying the present and came back again, at the longest, in three-quarters of an hour's time.

All this Meyrick promised to do, but to make quite sure, Old Mother told him to tell Alice that they were to start at once, and really be back in three-quarters of an hour, and not to go farther than the one shop.

Meyrick could always be trusted to deliver messages, but to-day he could think of nothing but the present he was about to buy, and seemed to forget everything else. He took eighteenpence out with him.

They went to the nearest toy-shop and stayed there quite half an hour, but nothing suited Meyrick

there at eighteenpence, so he came out again and went on to another shop, never for one moment remembering one word that Old Mother had said. In his excitement he really forgot, or would not have disobeyed.

In the next shop they spent another halfhour. "It's getting late, Master Meyrick," said Alice, "and Miss Meta has a cold; I don't think we must stay any longer."

"Oh, I forgot," he then said, quickly; "do you think we've been out half an hour yet? I quite forgot, because we're only to be out three-quarters of an hour, and it will take us a little time to get back, won't it?"

He had selected a new kind of top that cost exactly eighteenpence, and was just having it wrapt up in paper. He had paid for it. Alice told him that she should say they had been out more than an hour.

"Oh, Alice," he said, as they went out of the shop, "and I didn't think once, and we were only to go to one shop; do you think Meta will hurt much?"

As they went from the hot shop into the cold street, Meta began to cough, and she coughed very often going home.

Meyrick then remembered that he had only thought of his toy, and had not taken any care of Meta at all to-day.

The time had passed very quickly with them both; Meta had liked looking at the toys very much too.

"It's all my fault, Old Mother, and I am very

sorry," Meyrick said, as Old Mother came herself to the door to let them in the moment they arrived; "I quite forgot to tell Alice anything about it. I hope it hasn't hurt Meta. I never remembered once till Alice said something, and then it was too late."

"It was very naughty of you, Meyrick, to disobey me; you have been to more than the one shop, because I sent there for you when you did not return in time, and this is much too late for Meta to be out."

"That's what I forgot," said Meyrick, "we couldn't get anything in that shop, and then we went on to another."

"I am very angry with you, Meyrick; I thought I could trust you, but I see I cannot; this is very naughty indeed. You will have to go to bed half an hour earlier than usual to-night for a punishment."

"You ought to have known better, Alice, than to let Miss Meta stay out so late with a cold," said Mrs. Irving, as soon as Meyrick had gone upstairs to have a good cry by himself. "You have been out nearly an hour and a half, and half an hour makes such a difference at this time of the day, it just gives the sun time to set."

Meta had run upstairs to have her wraps taken off.

"I haven't taken care of you, Meta," sobbed Meyrick when he saw her; "is your cold much worse? I don't like my top now, and I think I shall throw it away."

Meta begged her brother not to do that, as it would be such a pity, because she liked it, and she thought Ernest Campbell would too.

Francis was brought downstairs to play in the dining-room till tea-time. He often came down now, sometimes even to meals, and liked to sit on Old Mother's lap and look at pictures. He had some linen picture-books of his own that would not tear.

Meta was not allowed to play with her little brother to-night for fear of giving him her cold.

It was certainly much worse, and soon after tea she had to put her little feet in hot water, get quickly into bed and have something nice and hot to drink when she was in bed, and a poultice on her chest. Meyrick was forgiven, because Old Mother could see that he had really forgotten, and was very sorry now, but he had to go to bed half an hour before the usual time to help him to remember next time.

The morning before the party Meyrick could think and talk of little else; Meta did not talk much because her throat was very sore, but she thought about it quite as much as did Meyrick.

Directly after dinner Old Mother called Meta up to her.

"Meta dear," she said, "shall you mind staying at home very much this evening and letting Meyrick go to the party alone? Your cold is so bad that Old Mother dare not let you go out."

The child burst into tears.

"Couldn't I wrap up very warm?" she pleaded.

"You must not go, darling," said Old Mother, "your cold is much too bad."

"But it will be so beautiful," whined the little girl.

At this moment Jimmy and Meyrick came into

the room, Jimmy carrying Meyrick's new boots for the party, that had just come and which he was now bringing to show Old Mother.

"Don't you think, Jimmy, that Miss Meta would be much better at home to-night with her bad cold?" asked Old Mother of the man.

"It well foggy," he answered, "but poor little Miss Meta!"

The child went on crying.

Disappointments are very hard for little children to bear, oh, very, very hard, but it is well that they sometimes have them, or else how would they otherwise learn, all at once, as they become grown-up people, to bear the heavy, very heavy disappointments that then come to them so often?

"Oh Old Mother, Old Mother," exclaimed Meyrick, "do you *really* mean to say that Meta isn't to go to-night," and as he spoke he flung his arms coaxingly round the old lady's neck; "don't you think she could go if you wrapped her up ever so warm? It *will* be so beautiful!"

Crying now made Meta cough again.

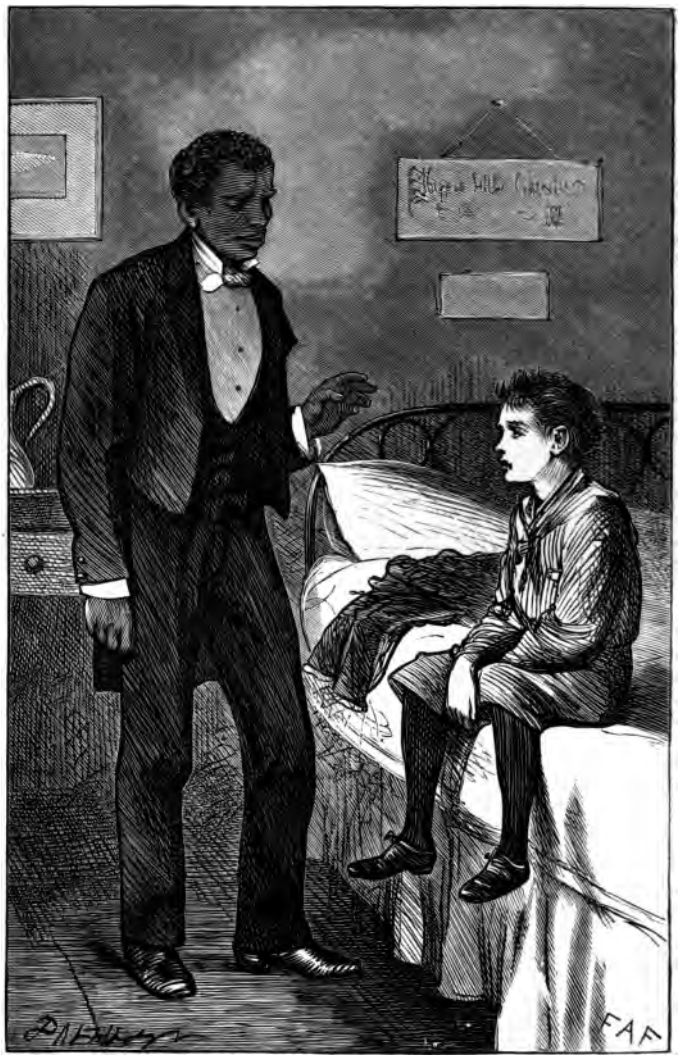
"The rooms there will be very hot," said Old Mother, "and very likely the passages draughty, but if not, Meta would feel chilly going from the hot house into the cab. I dare not let her go, Meyrick, though, perhaps, it grieves me more to say this than it does either of you to hear it. You can go, Meyrick, of course, and as soon as Meta is well again we will think of some treat for her to make up for this disappointment, poor little girl!"

The children both thought that no treat could ever

make up for losing this one to which they had both looked forward so very much!

"No cry, Miss Meta, no cry," said Jimmy, "Old Missis quite right, an' Jimmy tell Miss Meta fine Anansi story when Mars' Meyrick garn."

But Meta was very unhappy, and so was Meyrick for the rest of that afternoon.



"'But I didn't take care of her, Jimmy.'"—p. 311

CHAPTER LIII.

THE STRUGGLE.

IT was an early party to which the children were invited, for they were requested to be there by half past four o'clock, for tea at five.

At half past three Jimmy came to fetch Meyrick to be dressed.

The little boy did not move at first, then he jumped up quickly from his seat, ran upstairs into his own little room, where he arrived a minute before Jimmy.

When the man came in, he found his little master crying very bitterly.

"No cry, Mars' Meyrick," said Jimmy, "you mek eyes red, an' you mek Miss Meta feel more bad; us find her 'noder treat some fine day, when cold garn."

"But I didn't take care of her, Jimmy, and it's my fault."

Meyrick's clothes were laid out on his little bed, a quite new black velvet suit, all ready for him to put on.

"Jimmy," he asked, "do you mind going into the next room for a moment, I want to be alone just a

moment to think and make up my mind *quite* to something, it's getting made up now, but it's not quite."

Jimmy went. He was too well accustomed to his little master's funny ways to be very much astonished at this request.

Meyrick, when left alone, examined first the pretty new suit Old Mother had bought him for the party, then the new boots and tie, and then the top that he had meant to take himself to Campbell for a birthday present.

Oh, how he had looked forward to this party, but then Meta had looked forward to it also!

"Of course Ernest Campbell was more his friend than he was Meta's," a voice whispered in his ear.

"But I made her ill," another answered, "oh what shall I do?" and poor little Meyrick flung himself across a chair and cried with bitter disappointment whilst two conflicting powers within him carried on this argument.

"She had a cold before, and it might have got bad anyhow."

"But I kept her out, and made it worse and did not take care of her."

"But Campbell said he wanted me to go—oh it will be *so* beautiful!"

"And Meta will be sorry she does not go, and father and mother said 'take care of Meta.'"

The struggle was a fierce one for Meyrick—as fierce for a little boy of his age and temperament as he could well have had to endure—but it was quickly over, and when he jumped up and ran to Jimmy,

he said "Jimmy I shan't want you to dress me now, thank you. I'm not going to this party."

"No go, Mars' Meyrick?"

"No, Jimmy," said the child, as he pushed the man down on to a chair and climbed on to his knee as he used to do at "The Retreat." "You know I've got to look after Meta, don't you? Well I didn't do it when we went to buy the top, and I made her cold worse and so she can't go to the party. Well, as she can't go, I shan't either, and I shall stay and play with her. I think that will be rather a good way to take care of her, don't you?"

Meyrick had to speak the words quickly and sharply to get them out. It cost him very much to say this.

The man looked astonished.

"But Mars' Meyrick," he said, "you gib up dis party dat you so look for?"

"I must, Jimmy, I feel I must," said the little boy; "Meta has to give it up too; but oh, Jimmy," he continued as he fairly sobbed on the man's shoulder, "I do *so* want to go."

"Den go, Mars' Meyrick, an' I play wid Miss Meta. I ask Ole Missis let me, an' de Ole Missis gib her 'noder treat. You go, Mars' Meyrick, no stay at home fe dat, an' it well time dress now."

Meyrick considered again.

He had looked forward so very much to going, but then Meta had looked forward to going with him, and when it seemed to be his fault that she must stay at home, he felt he could not go without her, it would be *so* unkind!

"Jimmy," he said, "will you please go and tell Old

Mother I want to speak to her, and will she please come up here at once as it's particular and a secret."

"If Mars' Meyrick mind quite made up."

"Yes, Jimmy, it is now quite."

Old Mother very soon came in answer to the little boy's summons.

She wondered that he had not yet begun to dress, and at his tear-stained face.

"Old Mother, darling," he said, taking her hand, "you won't be angry, please, will you, but you know I'm not going to Campbell's birthday party."

"Not going, Meyrick?" she asked, "what do you mean my little boy?"

The brave little fellow could hardly restrain his tears whilst he answered:

"Why, Old Mother, that as I've got to take care of Meta and did not do it when we went to buy the top and made her cold worse, I must stop and play with her this evening, because she'd cry if I went to the party without her; she'd be sure to."

As he spoke, the Magic Lantern, the Conjuror, Punch and Judy, all passed before his mind, and sorely tempted him to break his resolution. But it was a brave little heart and conscience that had combined to make it, and a brave little boy would keep it.

"Meta shall have another treat, Meyrick, and I think we shall be able to make her happy this evening," said Old Mother, looking very much pleased.

"But it won't be a Conjuror, a Punch and Judy or a Magic Lantern. Old Mother, do you know I want to go to the party so very, very much, so please don't ask me once more to go in case I might."

"I am thinking how disappointed your little friend will be."

"I'll send his top if I may, and *he'll* have the Conjuror, Punch and Judy, and Magic Lantern, so it won't matter to him."

Old Mother tried to persuade no more.

She kissed the handsome little fellow, who in his best moments reminded her of both his parents; his mother's love and gentleness, and his father's firmness of purpose and brave determination, were strangely blended in this young boy's character.

"Then shall I send Jimmy with a letter to say that Meta has a bad cold and cannot come, and that you are staying to play with her?" asked Old Mother.

"Yes please, and that I send the top for a birthday present, and I hope he'll like it."

Jimmy was then sent to get ready to deliver the note containing these messages, which Old Mother went downstairs to write.

Meyrick stayed a few minutes longer in his little bedroom—oh the day had come—the beautiful party-day that had seemed as if it never would come, and now they weren't going after all! He could not stay up here as he did not want to see his new clothes any more, and he could not go down as he did not want to see Old Mother write the letter.

She was just handing it to Jimmy as he went into the dining-room, he therefore hid his face in the folds of her dress so as not to see the man go away with it.

Old Mother had told Jimmy to bring in from a confectioner's a large sugared-cake for the children

to have at tea. This Meyrick cut, and Meta had her tea-things to pour out tea.

Meta really thanked Meyrick for his kindness to her to-day, and Old Mother was very happy when, during the evening, she watched the children playing happily together, to think how nobly the little boy had behaved.

This day's conduct augured a very good future for the child.

If now, whilst so young a boy, he began to teach himself to give up his own pleasure for his sister's good and his conscience' sake, and he went bravely on with this work of self-discipline, how much grace, how much strength, it might be hoped, would be his in years to come when, as he grew older and temptations grew with his growth, he would need both abundantly.

That night when Meyrick laid his head down upon his pillow he felt very happy, and it was from his heart that, in his prayers, he had said "thank You" to God for helping him to take care of Meta to-day, as it had been from his heart two days ago that he had asked pardon for neglect in this duty.

All night long he dreamt of what the Conjuror, Magic Lantern, and Punch and Judy would be like, but none of these things ended in a dream.

As soon as Meta was quite well again, Old Mother gave a little party for the children, and to it Ernest Campbell and many little friends were asked, and the entertainments during the evening were a Conjuror, Punch and Judy, and a Magic Lantern. How the children thanked Old Mother we can well ima-

gine, and not only did Meyrick and Meta enjoy themselves that evening very thoroughly, but all the children who were invited to the party, and the servants who were allowed to look on at the performances, amongst whom was Jimmy, thinking that he had never seen anything so wonderful in all his life! Little Francis screamed so loudly with delight when Punch and Judy was exhibited, that everybody looked round at him.

This was Meyrick's reward for his self-denial on Ernest Campbell's birthday, and he deserved it!

It is not always that well-doing is so fully and promptly rewarded.

If we knew that our self-denials, supposing we practise any, would meet with such returns, there would be no self-denial in them. Meyrick knew nothing of what would be later, on that party-night when, left to himself to wrestle and decide, his better self had gained so complete a victory.

That night he saw nothing but his own pleasure on the one hand, Meta's pleasure and a self-imposed duty on the other, and duty was the conqueror in the struggle.

But self-denials do meet with their rewards, even here—they are greatly blessed to children who practise them, if it be only in the enjoyment of a happy peacefulness which comes to a good child who has striven to make some one or other happy, sooner than indulge a selfish self!

CHAPTER LIV.

AFTER THREE YEARS.

THREE whole years Little Mar'sa had now spent with the Maroons, and it was no great wonder that he was quite happy in their midst, for he was so much of a favourite with the whole community, that I am sorry to say, for I am always sorry to have to say this of a child, everybody seemed to help to spoil him.

Many a time had the Maroons wondered who this little English boy could be, but most of them had come to the conclusion that he was the child of some emigrants, who had lost their lives at the time of the rebellion.

They did not think this, however, until they had forgotten the pretty, worked frock in which the baby had been dressed the day on which he was found in the arms of the rebel girl Letitia, and which Jane Briscoe had put away so carefully that she too had quite forgotten its existence.

The Sergeant was very sorry that he, and the rest of the band of Maroon men, had allowed Letitia to get away the day that they had surprised her on the

road to her father's home, without making her first tell them from whence she had taken the child, but had they questioned her further, in all probability, she would have answered their questions quite untruthfully, so they had really lost nothing by letting her go.

Little Mar'sa was now tanned and sun-burnt even to his pretty, soft hair, which was cut in front to keep it out of his eyes, but allowed to grow down his back, as long as it would.

He still wore only a little shirt, and his little bare legs and feet carried him all over Nannêe Town.

Whenever he went out of the village he wore a little frock over his shirt, a good hat and boots and socks. One of his great treats was to go to market, and when Mrs. Briscoe could take little Mar'sa there with her she did so.

Then he rode the mule, on which he sat safely and comfortably, his little feet resting in the hampers for stirrups, and Mrs. Briscoe and Theophilus walking beside him.

Many people stared at Little Mar'sa as he went along, wondering who he was, but few troubled themselves enough to ask many questions about him.

He was just beginning now to ask questions about himself, and to wonder why he was white when Theophilus and his sisters and so many other people around him were black. The Maroons thought that as yet the little boy was too young to be told how he had been found by them, but they intended, in a

very short time, to tell him all they knew about himself.

The English that the child spoke was of a very broken kind, the same negro that the Maroons talked together. He would hardly have understood good English had he heard it spoken, and this was very natural, for he knew no parents but the Sergeant and his wife, no brothers or sisters but Theophilus, Rebecca and Ada; and heard no English but what they spoke; he was quite one of them.

Like their own children, he called Sergeant Briscoe "Dar'da" and his wife "Mar'ma." He remembered no home whatever, how should he? but the Maroon hut.

But Little Mar'sa had been taught nothing about God, for God was neither known, nor loved, nor feared, by the Briscoe family, therefore he had as yet never heard of his Heavenly Father, unlike his twin-brother Francis who, for nearly two years past, had learnt to lisp short prayers to the God who made, loved, and took care of him, to the Saviour Jesus, whom Aunt Irving had taught him to love because *He* loved Francis.

Of all the members of the Briscoe household, of all the inhabitants of Nannêe Town, Little Mar'sa loved Theophilus best; he doted on the lad who, although now a boy of eight years old, was most kind and gentle to Little Mar'sa, spinning tops to please him, as often as he wished them to be spun, giving him the largest mangoes he could find, and making little whips and baskets for him.

Mar'sa missed Theophilus when he went to school,

but when he came home again, and showed the little boy how the children marched in and out of school, Little Mar'sa liked the fun and learnt to march also, and when Theophilus sang him the songs which the boys and girls sang at school, he would try to sing these too.

Little Mar'sa sometimes cried to go to school with Theophilus, but he could not be allowed to do so, for two rivers, the Rio Grande and Black Water, had to be crossed to get to school, and Little Mar'sa must be two or three years older before he could be trusted to cross them by himself.

He imitated the little black children in carrying things upon their heads, and could balance little basket-loads quite cleverly already.

Two or three times the little fellow had had rather severe attacks of fever, but Mrs. Briscoe had soon cured him of them with fever remedies, of which the Maroons knew very many.

One day when Theophilus had a holiday from school, he told Little Mar'sa that he would take him into the woods, if he liked, to see him climb a tree for mangoes, and never had the little fellow looked happier or prettier than when, in great delight, he started off on this expedition with his friend Theophilus.

He had a bright, warm colour on his cheeks to-day, his hat was half off, half on, his head, and his auburn curls hung in thick clusters over his shoulders, as on two little bare feet he trotted briskly along. He was chatting very eagerly, but stopping every now and then to look up and say "Marning" to some one or

other passing along the short cut through the woods, and most of these people, knowing the child by sight, looked very kindly at the polite little boy as they said in return "Marning, Little Mar'sa," to him.

CHAPTER LV.

NANA IN NANNÉE TOWN.

THEOPHILUS was up the mango tree, shaking the branches on which the ripe fruit hung, and Little Mar'sa was below running to and fro, picking up one mango after another as it fell from the tree, and putting it into a small basket which Theophilus had brought out with him. He had already collected a great many, and was calling out to Theophilus to come down now and "nyam" them, when a well-dressed black woman, who was walking slowly through the wood, stopped still and stared very strangely at the child.

Little Mar'sa was accustomed to be looked at, but no one had ever looked at him like this before.

He would have run away if Theophilus had not been up the tree.

"Hi, how pick'ninny favour poor Mars' Cleveland!" the woman said, speaking the words aloud.

Theophilus was soon on the ground beside Mar'sa, who ran at once to take his hand and talk to him.

The woman listened to the little voice.

If her eyes had been shut she would have said a little negro spoke.

Very intently she gazed at the child.

She had heard from some traveller, whilst staying for a few days with her friends in Port Antonio, that an English pick'ninny had been seen in Nannêe Town. Therefore had she set out for this village and had reached it, as she had set out for, and reached, many villages before when the slightest hope was held out to her of there finding the child whom she sought.

Many had been her disappointments, but at the end of three years of fruitless hunting for one whom she did not find, she set out once more, on a lengthened journey, and this search was to be crowned with success!

Who was that little English boy? and what was he doing here amongst Maroons where no white people lived?

Why was he bare-footed and wearing only a shirt? How came it about that he and the Maroon lad seemed like brothers together?

As the woman asked herself these questions, what joy, unutterable joy, filled her heart, for who was he! this English boy? *She* knew!

Nana, for this visitor to Nannêe Town is none other than our faithful Nana, could hardly speak for joy.

Such a change had come into her life. She had passed in one moment out of sorrow into great happiness.

Like as when a traveller, who for a long time has lost his way, comes suddenly upon a path on which he recognizes an old familiar landmark that tells him he is once more safe, so Nana knew that she was on the right track at last, that the child for whom,

for three long years, she had sought in vain, stood before her. She talked to Theophilus and asked who his playmate was.

The child replied that he was "Little Mar'sa," and belonged to him and his Dar'da and Mar'ma.

Had he been with them long? she asked further, and how had they found him? Theophilus knew that he had been with them a long time, but he did not know how they had found him, though he had heard some talk about it.

Seeing Theophilus make friends with the stranger, Little Mar'sa did the same, and soon allowed her to lift him into her arms and kiss him, so long as Theophilus stood by very close.

"Syd's like all of us," Meyrick had once said, and true enough this he now proved to be; so like that Nana was quite sure this child of the Maroons could be none other than Sydney Cleveland.

There were his mother's and Meta's soft blue eyes, there was his father's high forehead, his chin, the same expression even of the mouth; there was already Meyrick's independent little spirit, his manly bearing; there was a look of the baby Francis, as Nana last remembered him, when on the Royal Mail Steamer she had handed him over to the care of his new nurse; but it was the likeness to Mars' Cleveland that was most striking in this child of nearly four years old, whom she now held in her arms.

His hair was darker than Meta's, but lighter than Meyrick's or his father's.

And *was* this, could this really be the child who had been lost so long and whose loss had caused such

bitter sorrow to his Nana that for the small chance of ever finding him again she had parted from the other children?

It was this child indeed.

Nana asked Theophilus many questions, but could gather nothing from his answers, except that he was a Maroon boy and had his home in the Maroon settlement of Nannêe Town, where little Mar'sa was one of them.

Nana then told Theophilus to "carry" her to his home, as she had something to say to his Mar'ma; and the Maroon boy led the way, which she gladly followed.

She wished to lead Little Mar'sa by the hand, but he objected to this, and ran on with Theophilus. Nana could not take her eyes, for one moment, off the little white boy now running along beside his Maroon friend, eating a mango all the way he went, and carrying a very large one home, in his disengaged hand, for Rebecca. How pretty the long, wavy hair looked, making a sort of covering to the little shirt that barely reached to his knees: but could this barefooted, half-clad child really be one of Mars' Cleveland's?

How strange it seemed, and strange too that he should be in the possession of Maroons, people who were at friendship with the white race!

No Maroon had stolen the baby, of this Nana felt sure, and no Maroon would refuse to give him up, could she prove his identity, and that it was good for him to go, for she knew that these people had so very keen a sense of honour that, when the reward of

"The little white boy now running along beside his Maroon friend. —p. 326

£500 was offered to them for capturing Paul Bogle, after earning the reward, they refused to accept it.

Were the twin-brothers alike now, Nana wondered. Only last mail had she received a letter from little Miss Meta in which she said a great deal about Francis, who was growing a big boy and had long hair like Meyrick used to have before they came to England and Old Mother saw him.

Would the twins be so much alike now that one would hardly know them apart, or would Syd's three years of bush life have so tanned and hardened him that the very great likeness would have fled?

She could not tell, but now they had arrived at Little Mar'sa's home, and he had already given Rebecca, who had run out to meet him, the large mango that he had brought home on purpose for her.

Nana followed, and when she told Mrs. Briscoe, who stood at her door waiting for Little Mar'sa, that she wished to speak to her very particularly, she was told to come inside whilst the children were sent out to play. Nana then asked many questions.

Was not the child they called "Little Mar'sa" a white boy? and how had he come to live at Nannêe Town?

Why did this stranger ask these questions? Mrs. Briscoe wanted to know.

Then she explained how, during the rebellion, when she was Nana to some English children, one of them was lost, and that this child was exactly like the children's father whom even as a baby he had much resembled. Sergeant Briscoe came in whilst Nana said this.

What more could she tell him about the baby? the Sergeant asked.

She considered, then described the worked frock he wore the day that he was carried away from the cave.

This was produced, and Nana had exactly described it.

What else could she remember?

The mole; there was a little black mark under the baby's chin when he was lost, that Jimmy said would never go away.

This Jane Briscoe knew the little fellow had. She had not noticed it at first, because it was so very small, but once she fancied it was a little smut, and then she found that it would not wash off.

After Nana had told a little more about the child Sydney and his family, the Sergeant felt satisfied that this child, whom he had rescued from rebel hands, and had nourished and brought up in his own home, amongst his own children, was really the Mars' Sydney Cleveland, for whom his Nana was in search, to carry to his brothers and sister in England, and then he told her how he came by the child, which account interested his hearer greatly, but which story we know too well to hear again.

The child was soon called in, and when the Sergeant took him upon his knee and held up his little chin, he saw, for the first time, the little mole that Nana had remembered to be under the chin of the baby-boy whom she had lost.

Then Mar'sa made friends with Nana and sat upon her lap and listened, as she read aloud letters she

had received from England from his sister Meta, begging her to come to that country soon. He did not understand a word about it all, but listened because Dar'da and Theophilus listened too.

Then Nana told the Sergeant where Thoney was still living as Mr. Hilliard's coachman, so that he could ask him the facts of the case if he wished to do so, but he was satisfied that Nana spoke the truth, only not satisfied at all to part with his "Little Mar'sa." And poor Theophilus, what would he do? Mar'sa clung to his friend when he understood more what was being said, and told him that he would not go away anywhere unless he came too.

Both the Sergeant and Mrs. Briscoe admired very much Nana's perseverance in looking for the child so long, and wondered that she had not thought with Jimmy and Thoney that he was dead.

The Sergeant quite saw how it was that inquiries respecting the lost child had not been more widely circulated, when he heard how Nana and Jimmy had acted in the matter.

Mar'ma could not bear the thought of parting with her boy, but saw that she must make up her mind to do this in a very few days, when Nana, who now intended to go to Mr. Hilliard and own all the truth with regard to the child whom she had lost and found, would carry him thither when she had made him some suitable clothes to wear, if the gentleman decided upon her doing so, until they should sail together for England.

Nana then told the Sergeant that she was quite sure Mars' Hilliard and Mars' Cleveland's other

friends would reward him handsomely for all he had done for this child; but he said that all that he had done had given him great pleasure, and he wanted no reward.

Strange to say, Nana and the Sergeant had met before, and now recognized one another again, for they had not only met but spoken, though, for some time, they could not remember where this meeting had taken place.

It was on Kingston Wharf, the day that Governor Eyre left the island, whither both had gone to see him off, to see the last of one whom they looked upon with deep reverence and gratitude, for having put an end to fearful English bloodshed, by quelling a rebellion that was desolating terribly their Island.

None regretted the recall of the Governor more than the Maroons themselves, who went in crowds to see him off and thus show token of their regard and respect.

How near Nana had been that day to knowing where little Sydney was, could she but have guessed that he, by whose side she stood on that wharf, had him safely housed at his own home!

But she guessed nothing of the kind, how could she, and in carrying on the deception that the child had died, she shut out all probability of seeing the little one again!

CHAPTER LVI.

RECOGNIZED BEYOND DOUBT.

NANA very soon visited Mr. Hilliard, who, after her confession was made, was quick to forgive her long-kept-up, ill-judged deception.

Thoney had been called in to corroborate her statements.

There was no need now to tell her that she had acted imprudently, foolishly, wrongly—she saw this herself; but had she not also, herself, fully atoned for her wrong-doing?

Neither Mr. Hilliard nor his wife, somehow, quite believed that the child whom Nana had found in the Maroon hut, at Nannêe Town, was the twin-baby that had been lost three years before, until Nana, who had very quickly made clothes in which the child could appear at Perivale, brought him thither, and then there was no doubt about his identity, there was no mistaking the extraordinary likeness to the father after whom the baby Sydney had been named; and every one who had known the Cleveland family felt sure that this child was little Sydney Cleveland. Also, when later, Nana reminded Mrs. Hilliard of the small mole under the chin which, for some weeks after the birth of the twin-brothers, was the only perceptible

difference between them, and now pointed it out to Mrs. Hilliard on this little boy's chin, she remembered hearing of it from the baby's own mother.

It was a very sorrowful day in the valley of Nannêe Town, on which Little Mar'sa was carried away from his Maroon home, and over and over again he said he would not go with Nana. It was a hard matter to make the little fellow say his last "good-byes" to Dar'da, Mar'ma, and Theophilus, after every other Maroon friend had turned out to wish the little favourite "good-bye."

Poor little Theophilus cried bitterly as he followed Little Mar'sa as far as he could on his road to Blue Mountain Valley, and when, at last, he had to turn back, and the parting came between the little black and white "brother-boys," as they seemed to one another, he sobbed aloud.

Mr. Hilliard had written to Mrs. Irving relating what had happened, and so soon as her answer to this letter came Nana was to be in readiness to set sail for England with the child.

A large sum of money was offered by Mr. Hilliard, in the name of his late friend, Mr. Sydney Cleveland, to Sergeant Briscoe for his and his wife's goodness towards the little one, whom they had befriended, but he refused to take anything in payment.

Mrs. Hilliard thought that little Sydney Cleveland spoke the most terrible English that it was possible for any little English boy to speak, but she hoped that in time, as he heard proper English spoken, he would grow out of this bad habit.

His accent was so purely negro, that when you

did not look at little Syd you could not possibly imagine the little speaker, to whom you listened, to be an English child at all.

Nana was, oh! so happy now, too happy to express her feelings, and Thoney was very happy also.

Mrs. Hilliard said that she had never seen such a difference in a woman as she noticed between Nana now, and the same Nana just before the other little Clevelands left for England.

Poor thing! How terribly she had suffered in consequence of her dreadful secret, but how nobly and perseveringly she had behaved in the matter of her resolve to find the child if he were yet to be found!

Syd liked and did not like his new life, but more often he did not like it.

It was so strange and formal, and many a time he could not understand one word that Mrs. Hilliard spoke to him.

He was very fond of Thoney, and the man was greatly amused when the little boy came out to play and work with him, to watch him always first kick off his boots and socks, because he could play so much more comfortably, and naturally, without them.

He had no love for fine clothes, and felt much too hot when he had to play about in a frock.

The expected letter had now arrived from England; Nana's and little Master Sydney Cleveland's berths were taken on board the next homeward bound Royal Mail steamer from Jamaica, and the good woman was preparing for the voyage.

Mrs. Irving had been most unexpectedly surprised at the news she received, Jimmy had been also much

astonished, for we know that for some time he had quite made up his mind that Nana's search would be fruitless, and that the child was dead, and Meyrick and Meta seemed to have forgotten all about their little brother being lost, until Jimmy recalled the circumstances to their minds, and then they remembered about it and were so glad to have another little brother again, and wondered so much and so often if he were just like Francis, with just the same nose and eyes and mouth and hair, and if he wore just the same clothes.

But Nana, oh, one and all, were so glad to think of seeing Nana again; Meta skipped round and round the room in delight, and little Francis even mocked his brother and sister to exclaim, "Oh Nana, dear Nana, fancy seeing our own Nana again, oh it does seem too good to be true!"

Mrs. Irving was also very anxious and eager to see, and welcome, one who had been so dear and faithful a friend and servant to her foster-child, and so true to her little children.

And if Nana could only have peeped into the new home into which she and little Sydney were so soon to be received, and have caught sight of the welcome there waiting for them, she would hardly have had patience to live out the three weeks' voyage that had to be made before they could arrive.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE FLOWERS.

NANA and little Syd were "all packed" as the saying is, and to-morrow they were to leave Perivale.

The little boy had grown very fond of his Nana again; he was beginning to take in that though Dar'da, Mar'ma, and Theophilus were so very good to him, that he did not belong to them, and that he was going to a country far, far away, where he would see a brother Meyrick, a sister Meta, and another little brother who used to be just like himself, and he made Nana tell him this very often, whilst he listened more attentively each time to what she said, and grew, as he listened, happy and contented.

Nana and little Syd now took a walk together.

This child must see what the other children all saw, must say "good-bye" to what, to whom they said "good-bye," so she led him to an all-familiar spot to her, but to one that Sydney saw now for the first time, and where something also told her they both stood for the last time.

They were at Woodlands' grave-side. It was the same grave that Jimmy dug, for he begged hard for it not to be changed, "as young Missis chiced it," he said very often.

But the husband and wife had now been more care-

fully buried within it than Jimmy had had time to bury them the day he dug, the day he and Thoney opened the grave, and a handsome railing extended all round, a railing that had a gate which could be opened to make it easier to tend the flowers that blossomed upon it.

Little Syd saw nothing but exquisite flowers, growing in a very lovely place, flowers that had sprung from the very roots that Meyrick planted for Meta and himself, and from other roots that had been planted there since then.

He saw nothing else, he knew nothing of the love that was buried beneath those flowers, he never heard the yearning cry: "Nana, take care of him, his boy, his namesake," he never felt the dying kiss that he was the last to receive, for he slept when he received it, but she, Nana, had seen this kiss given, had heard those words spoken, and now, hearing their echo even more distinctly than she had heard the words themselves uttered, she felt oh! so thankful for what had lately come to pass and again promised, God helping her, to faithfully obey them.

She told Syddy that his real Dar'da and Mar'ma were half there and half in heaven, but she could not explain it properly, and he knew nothing of heaven, and understood nought of an earthly grave, how should he? So he gave no heed to her words, and could not understand at all why she should cry as she gathered flower after flower to take to England to be treasured.

Meyrick must have some, Meta too, and also little Francis. They would all want flowers from here, and

she would take them to them very carefully, but she must leave plenty growing there too, as Mars' Meyrick and Miss Meta would be sure to ask how many she had left behind to go on growing.

Syd gathered also. Nana told him that he might pick just a few if he liked, and he liked this permission very much, and it did not matter although he gathered his flowers with very short stalks, for young Missis used to teach the children how to press flowers, and therefore as they would want to press these, it would make no difference if some of the stalks were very short.

"Wha fu you cry, Nana?" Syd asked, as presently she led the little boy away.

"You no tink we got plenty flower?" and as he spoke he began to gather some of those that grew along the road.

She did not try to explain again, he would not understand, how could he?

She only snatched quickly the few precious flowers that she had allowed him to carry himself, so that he should not mix them with other flowers that he might gather now, however beautiful they might be, for she must know all these apart. Not one garden, or road-side flower, must trespass into that bunch of flowers from the grave.

Syd said that she could have all those, as he liked the new ones better, and he gathered flower upon flower as homeward they sauntered, till he had a very large bunch, which he told Nana she might take to England too if she liked, but she mustn't cry any more.

Poor little Syd! or happy little Syd! which was it?

Poor boy not to have parents, not to have known them and their great love for him, happy child not to know, not to feel, not to miss, not to long for, what he has lost!

CHAPTER LVIII.

GROWN-UP PEOPLE.

"I WONDER if Nana will be cold when she comes to England. I wonder what she'll think when she doesn't see any black people, aye, Jimmy; and Old Mother says they may be here to-morrow. Oh, won't it be beautiful to see little Syd again?" Meyrick rattled on, "and if we know in time, you and I are to go to the station to meet them, fancy that Jimmy—not to Southampton. Old Mother thought she'd better send some one else there, but to Waterloo."

"I wonder if Syd will like the 'Snow Country!'" put in Meta. "I expect he'll be surprised, because we were at first, weren't we, but not Francis, because he was too little then."

Meta had called England "the Snow Country" ever since she and Meyrick had seen their first fall of snow.

"I guess he will," answered her brother, "and shan't we have a lot to teach and show Nana? Francis will be able to teach Syd a little, by now, I expect to save us, as he ought to know a good

deal about England by this time. Oh, Meta, I do so wish they were here! I can hardly wait for them to come, can you?"

"No," answered Meta, "but I think if I fetch Jessie I shall be able to wait better; won't Nana be glad to see her again?" and off the child bounded to fetch her doll to help her to wait patiently for Nana and her little brother.

When she came back Meyrick told her that she ought to put the doll on all her furs and winter things (Old Mother had given these) because, though it wasn't winter now, Nana would like to see quickly how people and dolls dressed, and how she'd have to dress when it was cold weather, and as she hadn't ever seen winter things, it would be a treat to her to see them on the doll she bought.

"I wonder when Francis and Sydney will go to school?" then said Meyrick, "and if they'll always learn the same things, and both be clever and stupid at the same time!"

Meyrick himself was now getting on capitally at school, and Old Mother was very well pleased with his reports.

She was also, on the whole, very well satisfied now with little Meta, who was an ever-so-much-better child at work, and play, and temper, than she used to be.

The children's conversation was interrupted by Old Mother coming into the room and sending them for a walk into the park.

Whilst out of doors they met two gentlemen, friends of Old Mother's, who stopped to talk to

them, and ask if their little brother had yet arrived.

After the second friend had stopped, spoken to the children, and moved on again, Meta reproved her brother by saying, "I thought, Meyrick, Old Mother said you were to take off your hat to every lady you knew, and to every gentleman, and that if you didn't, you'd be no gentleman yourself, and you never took your hat off just now."

"That's just why I didn't do it," said Meyrick.

"Don't you want to be a gentleman, Meyrick?" asked his little sister with surprise.

"Yes, of course *I* do, but you don't see it, Meta. Say what you said again."

"Don't you want to be a gentleman?"

"No, what you said before that."

The little girl considered.

"Old Mother said you ought to take off your hat to every lady and gentleman you know, or——"

"That will do, or you'll forget again," interrupted Meyrick; "that's why I didn't do it, because I'm to take it off to gentlemen, and I don't think Mr. Hill is one, because yesterday I met him out with Old Mother, and he never took his hat off, fancy Meta, not even to Old Mother, so *he* can't be much of a gentleman, can he? and that's why I don't take mine off to him; as I've got to take it off to *gentlemen* and ladies. I think I must be right, don't you, Meta?"

"Yes," she replied, "but I wonder why he isn't a gentleman, he seems like one, doesn't he?"

"Yes, but then you know Old Mother often says I

can't be a gentleman if I don't take off my hat to a lady, so he can't possibly be one, because I tell you he never took it off once even to Old Mother, when he said 'How do you do?' or 'Good-bye;' I watched him all the time."

"P'raps if you did it to him first, he'd learn," said Meta.

"I should not wonder if he's too old to learn now," replied the little boy. "I don't think people learn much when they get old, like that, do you? and p'raps, I don't know, but it might be wrong to take off my hat to any one who wasn't a gentleman; I must ask Old Mother to explain that properly. I know she told me, when I asked her the other day, that when I grew up I should have to take off my hat to everybody who took their hats off to me, but as I am not grown-up, of course *nobody* takes them off, so I can't tell."

"I wonder if that gentleman had no 'Old Mother' to teach him," said Meta.

"I expect that is it," answered Meyrick, "but when he's so old he ought to know himself, don't you think so, Meta?"

Meta did think so, and both children having made up their minds that they both very much disapproved of this elderly friend's conduct, they soon dismissed him from their minds.

When the children arrived home from their walk, Meyrick stood upon a chair, tied some thick string to it, and asked Meta to draw it along the room for him, as he wanted "to feel what it felt like" to be quite tall, and to walk along.

He put his hat on his head, for he wanted, when he came in front of the looking-glass, to see how he looked when he was a grown-up man taking it off, but Meta's part of the work was too difficult for her to perform properly, and she gave Meyrick and his chair such uncertain jerks, that he thought he'd better get down and pull her along, and let her be grown-up instead.

"Or suppose first, Meta," he said, "we're both grown-up, and I'll take off my hat to you."

This seemed a happy thought, and had any one come into the room a moment afterwards, Meyrick and Meta would have been seen standing on two chairs in front of the glass, practising how to be a real gentleman to a real lady. Meyrick thought that tea would soon be ready, therefore he was in a hurry to give Meta her turn of the "tall walk" for fear she should be disappointed, and jumping down from off the chair on which he stood, and telling her to stand as upright as she could, he began to drag Meta's chair along, but he soon pulled it so quickly, that she fell upon her face on to the floor.

Her forehead was a good deal hurt and bruised. but Meyrick comforted her so tenderly, and tried so hard to make it better, that the little girl bore her pain very bravely, and cried so softly, that Old Mother learnt nothing of the accident until Meta appeared at tea with a large bump on her forehead, that was turning to a yellowish blue.

Meyrick thought that it was such a pity Meta had fallen just then, as he said she must really have been beginning to feel quite well how grown-up people

felt when they were walking, as she was just as tall, and he was making her get along so quickly.

If any part of the performance made Meta feel like a grown-up person, the little girl could not help hoping that she might never feel like one again.

Meyrick had meant to give Meta pleasure when he chose this game, but he had not taken care of his sister quite in the right way to-day; the game was a little too dangerous.

CHAPTER LIX.

MEETING.

THE steamer was rather late in arriving, so the children had another whole day to wait for Nana and Sydney.

Meyrick was so sorry about Meta's forehead, because he thought perhaps Nana would hardly know her now, and he was sorry also that she would not look pretty for Nana to see.

The little girl had to keep wet rags on her bruise, and all day long Meyrick was asking if he should change them for his sister, and very often, directly new wet rags had been put on, he wanted to take them off to see if the bruise had gone down yet.

A telegram! a telegram!

Oh Meyrick screamed with joyful impatience! They had arrived, they had been met at Southampton, they were just going to start in the train and would be here by——

Meyrick never waited to hear by when—he ran upstairs to put on his little coat and hat, and to fetch Jimmy to be off to Waterloo.

How glad Nana was to see this little fellow again it is easy to picture!

The meeting at the station between Nana, Jimmy,

Meyrick, Sydney and Pedro is easier to imagine than to describe, for Pedro had followed Meyrick and Jimmy's cab, at first without their seeing him, and was at Waterloo Station also to meet the train, and recognize and welcome Nana.

"Syddy *is* brown!" exclaimed Meyrick, "but isn't he *just* the same size as Francis?"

The little child seemed very pleased to be kissed by Meyrick, but his little eyes sparkled with great joy as he caught sight of Jimmy, for his was the first black face that the child had seen since he left Jamaica, and he could not yet feel quite at home surrounded by white people.

How Meyrick chattered in the cab going home! How much he had to tell! How much to ask!

"Meta was so longing to see Nana," he told her, "but you mustn't see it, Nana," he added, "but she's got a bump on her forehead, so she isn't quite pretty, but it's better now. We were having a game and she fell down."

Nana saw nothing but loveliness in her little girl's face when she gazed upon it!

Little Syd stared with wonder and admiration at everything they saw on the road, for it was all quite new to him, and Syd was also very busy watching Pedro keep up with the cab.

A few minutes longer of quick driving and then Meta and Francis were clasped in Nana's arms: Old Mother was loving little Sydney, then Meta loved her new little brother, and then the twins kissed, Jimmy was standing at the door looking on.

If partings are sad, and who can doubt that they are fearfully sad, only those know how very happy and joyful meetings are, who have been parted for a time.

And the twins, were they really still alike?

Oh yes, their features were wonderfully the same, in their height there was not a shadow of difference, and even their hair was almost the same length; but little Syd was brown, rough-mannered, and talked very funnily, whilst Francis was a gentle little boy.

"Me Mar'sa, little Mar'sa," Syd kept on saying at first, as he had said often to Nana when she called him Sydney, "dat my name."

He could not understand at all being called by another one.

Francis then took Syd's hand and led him all about, showing him, as he thought, the most important things that were to be seen, and he seemed almost jealous when Meta wanted to help to show their little newly-found brother about too.

All the children clustered round Nana to lead her upstairs to take off her things.

They seemed as though they could not leave her for one moment.

And as she came down again, she and Syd were taken into the picture-room!

"Are you going away ever again?" asked Meta as they came out of that room, Nana having there been lost, as they were, in fond admiration.

"No," the present English nurse (for whom Old Mother had already found another very good

situation) told the children, Nana was going to be their nurse now, and not leave them again.

Another little crib had been bought and put into the night nursery! Another high chair had found its place round the dining-room tables.

How happy everybody was to-night! Old Mother, Nana, Jimmy, Meyrick, Meta, Sydney, Francis, Pedro, how very happy they all were in their several measures, how very, very happy, Nana especially, whose anxious search had been so rewarded, and whom Old Mother thanked and praised repeatedly for her self-denial and industrious perseverance.

Such glad moments seem to come to us at times; they hunt us out in our busy life, whose under-current is sad so often, and then we are so engrossed with their enjoyment, that we even forget our sadness, and all seems bright for the passing hour!

CHAPTER LX.

"OLD MOTHER."

IT was very strange to watch the twins together! How much very early association, example, training, or want of training, will do, they showed to perfection.

These twin-brothers of four years old were strangely alike in face, but as strangely unlike—not in disposition, for these two little branches, off-shoots of the same trees, were really disposed to grow the same way—but in behaviour, for the little branch that had received training was, as it were, growing straight; the other, that had had no training at all, was beginning to bear thorns instead of fruit.

Francis spoke the truth naturally, and would not have understood what a falsehood meant. If ever he did anything that was wrong, he owned his fault at once.

With little Sydney it was already a habit to hide any wrong that he might have done, and not to care to speak the truth.

He had seen deceptions practised, he had heard lies spoken, so unknowingly he had learnt to follow the example that was set him.

Francis said his prayers night and morning.

Sydney had all this to begin to learn!

Little Francis had been taught to be obedient.

Little Sydney had been accustomed to be spoilt, and to have his own way!

Francis talked baby English, had learnt his letters and could already spell easy little words.

Sydney talked baby negro, and had learnt to spell no words at all!

But there was plenty of time for the reading and spelling, for the proper English too—there was time for everything if the little boy were taken in hand at once, and wisely, kindly, firmly, judiciously trained and led.

Here was another, and a somewhat difficult task before Old Mother, which she would fulfil, God helping her, to the best of her ability, and if Sydney shall live to grow a big boy, it is to be hoped that then he will be grateful to Old Mother for the trouble she will have taken with, and for, him.

Old Mother's character was very beautiful, so calm, so gentle, so loving, so sympathetic; first she won the heart, then unconsciously, the respect of all, old or young, who came to know her, and were brought under the sway of her good influence.

Though she was now getting into years, she was still young in heart and feeling, and certainly not old in look! She had never felt that change come over her that some of us feel as we step suddenly, or it may be, gradually, out of youth into middle life; out of middle-life into old age, her faith, her hopes, her thoughts, all were still very young!

But nothing lastingly beautiful is of a moment's growth, and Old Mother's character had not been formed all in a moment.

It was not when she was old that she tried for the first time to be good, to love unselfishly, to do her duty unflinchingly, or in her old age she might have failed, for then there might have been too little sun to mature the seed.

Many an inward conflict had Mabel Irving had within herself at first, to baffle her faults and failings, but, with God's help, she had persevered, and had, in the end, not only baffled, but altogether conquered them.

The grand secret of the peaceful, restful calm of her disposition was that she never sought either for pleasure or for praise, she was very thankful for every pleasure as it came to her; she never felt that she merited praise, and she also never looked out for work to do, for duties to perform, but waited till these also came; and very often she said that God never kept her waiting.

Many at her age would have thought that it was time to have done with children and children's children, and would not have liked the trouble of bringing them up, but she was only too glad to become an "Old Mother" to her foster-child's motherless and fatherless little ones. and prayerfully, kindly and well did she fulfil every self-imposed duty towards them.

Meta still loved her old Nana very, very dearly, and was *so* happy to be with her again, but she told Meyrick that she could not say that she loved her better than she did "Old Mother" now, for she loved them both alike.

Meyrick was growing a very brave, frank, fearless little fellow, and his parents would have been very happy to see the way in which he fulfilled his promise to take care of his sister.

More and more funny did it become to watch the twins together, Sydney still loving to kick off his shoes and socks, to balance little loads on his head, to turn head over heels and to try to teach Francis to do the same, and the gentle little Francis trying in turn to teach his twin-brother how to behave properly, how to spell easy words, and to pronounce as he pronounced, though this was often dreadfully incorrect.

The children had all laughed very much at first to hear Sydney talk, but he soon learnt to imitate his brothers and sister, and then even his little voice began to change.

When on the first evening after Sydney's arrival, his little twin-brother knelt down to say his prayers, he knelt down beside him and mumbled something, trying to mock him, and for many days Syd would not learn to say his prayers without Francis. As Old Mother saw that the little Maroon boy was too restless to learn to do anything he did not wish to do, she let him go on his own way for a while, but then little Syd was also taught about God to whom prayers—*his* little prayers—were addressed, and he learnt to say them as "Old Mother" wished.

The children were very glad to have the "grave flowers," and thought it very kind of Nana to think of bringing them to them. On half-holidays they sometimes wrote to Thoney, and he liked to have their letters very much. When he could not read all in them

they knew that Mr. Hilliard would read them to him, and very often they told him that the flowers were quite good still and would always be good, as they had pressed them.

The children and Jimmy had sent Thoney and Nana presents back by the Nana who had come to England with them, and now they were getting another parcel ready for Thoney, and Sydney was to send a beautiful parcel of presents to Nannêe Town for Theophilus, Rebecca, Ada, and their parents, which Nana and "Old Mother" were choosing for him.

Old Mother was generally very busy and almost always seemed happy.

"What makes you look so happy, darling Old Mother?" Meta asked, one day, as she left off some needlework she was doing to fondle Old Mother; "you were smiling just now all to yourself."

"Guess, Meta," she answered, and looked into the little girl's face.

Meta seemed as though she hardly liked to say what she read in Old Mother's eyes.

"Because *I* love you very much?" she whispered.

"Yes," said Old Mother.

"And because Meyrick and the twins do too? But Sydney broke that vase this morning," Meta continued, "and you told us once that you valued that vase more than anything in the whole house, so Meyrick and I thought you would be very unhappy because it was broken: arn't you?"

"Yes," said Old Mother, and as she spoke she smiled again; "I valued that vase more than I can say, but as soon as Sydney broke it, he came, all by

himself, to tell me what he had done, and as he has never owned to any of his little wrong-doings before, his having owned to this has more than made up for the accident."

"I expect, somehow, that Francis advised him to come and tell you," said Meta; "it is so funny, Old Mother, the twins tell each other everything, and are always advising one another, do you notice?"

Did not Old Mother notice? Had she not noticed so carefully she could not have known what she knew, nor have acted as she acted!

"I am very glad you like us to love you, darling Old Mother," the little girl then said affectionately; "but you know we could not help loving you, because you are so very good and kind and love us so much too."

> "Ah! happy he who owns that tenderest joy
> The heart-love of a child."

GLOSSARY.

A GARN YA—I'm gone, I'm off now.

ANANSI STORIES—Stories that negroes tell. The Anansi is a very large spider, who is supposed to be a Spirit of Evil.

BAMBOO—A hard woody plant—cane.

BANANA FRITTERS—Fritters made from a common West Indian fruit.

BOXES DON'T FAT YET.—Are not full—not ready yet.

BUCKRA—White—white man.

BUNGALOW—A one-storied thatched house.

CALABASH—A large melon-like fruit with a hard shell that can be made into drinking-cups, baskets, &c.

CHICED—Chose.

DAY-CLEAN—Daybreak.

GONGO-PEAS—Small peas much grown by the Jamaica peasantry, to whom they are a valuable food.

GRENADILLA—A large melon-like fruit, of which the inside and the seeds are eaten.

HOW-DEY?—How do you do?

JOB'S TEARS—Bluish white seeds.

LIMES—Small sour lemons.

NANA—Nurse.

NO Y'ABLE—Not able.

NYAM—Eat.

PICKNEY-GANG—A gang of working children.

PICKNEYS—Children.

PICKANINNIES—Another word for children.

SNAKE-WAITING-BOYS—Slimy-looking, blackish lizards, the ugliest of the whole species.

YAM—A favourite common food in Jamaica, eaten very much instead of potato.

WHA FU?—What for?

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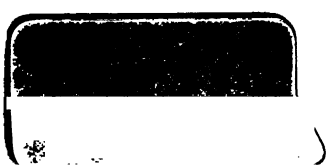
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